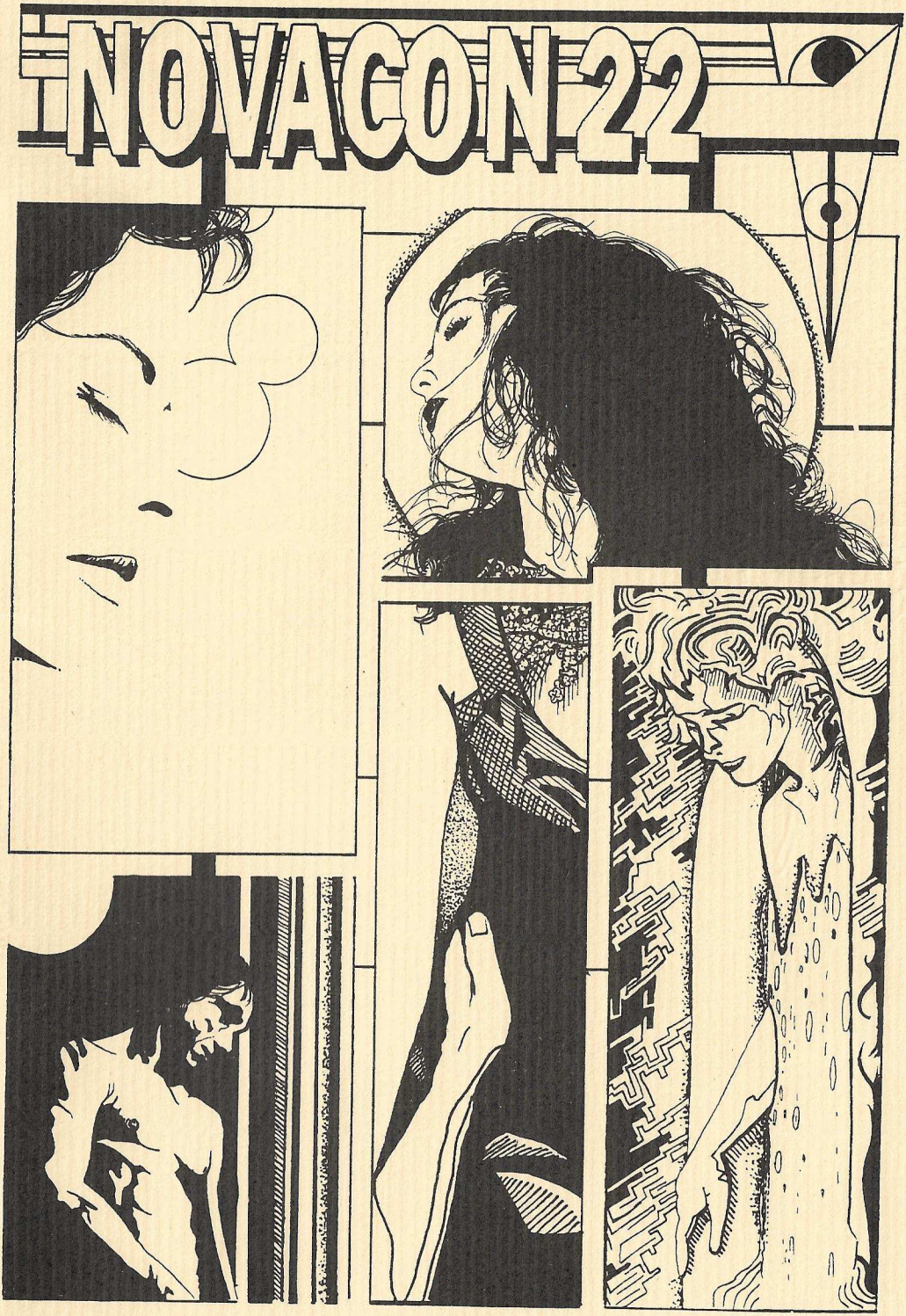
NOVACON 22

Guest of Honour	***Storm Constantine***
Chair	***Helena Bowles***
Committee	
Treasurer	***Richard Standage***
Membership	***Bernie Evans***
Operations & Guest Liaison	***Tony Berry***
Programme	***Carol Morton***
Publications	***Jenny Glover***
	Steve Glover
Staff	
Playroom	***Vicky Evans***
Artshow	***John Harrold***
Bookroom	***Mick Evans***

Friday November 6 to Sunday November 8 1992

Royal Angus Hotel, St Chad's Queensway

NOVACON

IS RUN ANNUALLY BY THE

Birmingham SF Group

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Brian W Aldiss

AND

Harry Harrison

TALKS, AUTHORS' SIGNINGS, NEWSLETTER AND SPECIAL EVENTS

THE BSFG MEETS AT 7.45PM ON THE THIRD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH (UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED) IN THE UPSTAIRS FUNCTION ROOM OF THE WHITE LION, CORNER OF THORP ST AND HORSEFAIR/BRISTOL ST IN THE CITY CENTRE.

FOR DETAILS CONTACT
BERNIE EVANS, 121 CAPE HILL, SMETHWICK, WARLEY,
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CHAIRMAN'S BIT
"...OR I'LL SEE YOU IN THE HOSPITAL ON MONDAY"

So we actually made it... The last minute hitches have been unsnagged, the crises are dealt with and it's only a few days until I can indulge myself in that long awaited nervous breakdown. Letters of condolences to All Saints Psychiatric Hospital. It's very handy for work as it's only over the canal and only five minutes' from home so Richard can easily visit. Very useful.

Still, it hasn't been all bad, I've had a great committee to work with - the super-efficient Carol Morton who wasn't so efficient she didn't get conned into organising *next* year's bash, Bernie "you'll have it Real Soon Now" Evans, Richard "Oh God, we're ruined" Standage, Tony "we should have done it this way" Berry, not forgetting of course the inestimable Steve and Jenny "write it again and we want a full page by the deadline" Glover. They've all been great.

Me? I've run up an immense phone bill getting through to the hotel switchboard. I've bitten my nails to the quick waiting a fortnight for each letter from the hotel. But never mind! The hotel has come up trumps and acceded to our requests (with a faint look of puzzlement on occasion, but still). So all that remains is for you to **enjoy**.

See ya in the padded cell! Ha ha ha ha...

Helena

NOVACON 23

Next year's Novacon will be chaired by Carol Morton. We are pleased to welcome Stephen Baxter as our Guest of Honour.

We hope to hold the con here at the Angus, over the first weekend of November 1993, but this is subject to confirmation.

As ever, it will be advantageous to join Novacon 23 at this weekend's special rate – if you join later it will cost you more!

Membership enquiries, please, to: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH.

PROGRAMME

Friday 6th November

5.00pm Film 1 *Freejack* - see film notes.

7.00pm Opening Ceremony Your chance to view the committee and GoH, submit any last minute suggestions and volunteer as a gopher (please!).

8.00pm Party Hosted by **Intersection**, the victorious Glaswegian Worldcon winners. Party with a Scottish theme - if you want to know more turn up and enjoy yourself. There will also be a cup full or so of Brian Ameringen's punch.

10.00pm Film 2 *Night of the Comet* - see film notes.

Saturday 7th November

10.00am Ian Stewart Scientific talk on the REAL science behind time travel. This promises to be fascinating, so make sure you're there bright eyed and bushy tailed.

11.15am Book Auction Once again the inimitable Rog Peyton will be attempting to (and probably succeeding) in parting you from your hard won cash in return for priceless (!) works of literature. Remember it's all in aid of RNIB's Talking Books for the Blind.

1.15pm Panel Discussion on "Why is there so much humour in Fantasy and not SF and does SF in fact lend itself to humour". Bob Shaw, Iain Banks, Tom Holt and Linda-Clare Toal (mod).

2.30pm Meeting. The BSFA are holding a meeting. Only members will be eligible to vote on any matters.

3.00pm GoH Interview Storm has asked to be interviewed rather than give a speech, so we have prevailed upon Graham Joyce to interview her.

4.15pm Panel Heirs of Tolkein Roadshow. Louise Cooper, Mike Jeffries and Rob Holdstock make a stop on their tour and give us their thoughts on "What are the reasons for the massive explosion in the volume of Fantasy published during the last ten years".

5.30pm Film 3 *Strange Invaders* - see film notes.

7.30pm Meeting Friends of Foundation are holding an EGM. Anyone welcome, but only members will be eligible to vote.

8.00pm Party Orbit will be holding their biennial bash at Novacon, free booze (for a while anyway), Orbit authors and a good time will be had by all.

9.30pm Set-up time A chance for a breather, wash and brush up - or if you feel so inclined, some food, before the Disco starts.

10.00pm Disco Back by popular request, but with VERY specific music, no rap, jive bunny or other horrors.

Sunday 8th November

10.00am Panel Discussion of Storm's *Wraeththu* Books. Storm, Jack Cohen, Elinor Predota and Steve Jeffery (mod) will discuss the biological (Jack) and sociological/anthropological (Elinor) aspects of the books.

11.15am Art Auction Rog Peyton ably assisted by Chris Morgan will be auctioning those works of art (well, those that the artists want to sell) that have been exhibited in the rooms on the second floor just before you reach the registration desk. You did remember to visit the exhibition, didn't you?

1.15pm Panel "What is it like to live with a creative person whilst they are creating?" Mark and Julia Smith (collectively Jonathan Wylie), Mark Hewkin (Storm's husband) and Chris Morgan (mod) will spill the beans.

2.30pm TAFF Pam Wells will grill the year's TAFF candidates Tony Berry, Michael Ashley, Abigail Frost and Ashley Watkins (or their representatives) on their platform for their candidacies.

3.45pm Awards Ceremony Did you win? Did you vote? Come along and see, and maybe say good-bye to those who have to leave early.

5.00pm Panel Discussion of the Books voted by the members as most popular. Rog Peyton, Pete Weston and Pauline Morgan (mod) and A N Other will put their views forward.

6.15pm Panel "What is it like to write as in a collaboration rather than writing on your own?" Bob Shaw, Dave Hardy, Mark and Julia Smith will tell all and 1/2r Cruttenden will keep order.

7.30pm Debate The BSFG in the guise of Helena Bowles and Jack Cohen will take on Aston University Fantasy and SF Society in the debate on "This house believes that it is Man's duty, as the most highly evolved living organism on this planet to pursue the goals of evolution to their maximum". The BSFG anti and Aston pro the motion. Let battle commence!

8.45pm Auction Pam Wells will be auctioning items for TAFF, so come along and be generous.

?.?? People's Disco As we don't know how long Pam's auction will take, we can't say when the disco, hosted by Aston University will start, but be assured that there will be one.

Well, that's about it. If you want to make any comments about the programme during the con, I'll be the very harassed person probably running round in circles and getting nowhere fast, so spare a kind word for me if you can, but the most important point is that you enjoy yourselves!

COMMITTEE BIOGRAPHIES

Helena Bowles

Entered fandom 1984, first con Fifteencon, first committee post publicity officer B'Group, first con committee post programme (yes, they conned me into it too) Novacon 19, first chairmanship Twentycon, first Novacon chair, this one. Last committee post - this one if I have anything to do with it. I'm the one gibbering under the table in the corner, "I didn't mean it... I was only joking..."

Richard Standage

As recounted elsewhere, my entry into fandom happened rather precipitately when I came to lodge with Martin Tudor. Within three days, I was compiling his fanzine *Empties*. Within three months I was attending my first convention, Novacon of course. Three years later, I was treasurer of my first con committee. Being one of the few fans able to face a cathedral nine column analysis book without trembling and demanding beer, I feel my talents have since been exploited in the way that only Brum fandom knows. To date, I have control of four separate treasurer's accounts, not to mention two chequing accounts. I guesstimate a grand total of fifteen thousand pounds have passed through my sticky paws since that fateful first post. If I'm not around this con, enquiries may reach me at Her Majesty's pleasure or under the newest stretch of the M25.

Tony Berry

Read SF books. Liked them. Went to Leeds University. Found there was an SF society. Joined it. Co-edited the society magazine. Found there was a Leeds Group. Joined it. Discovered strange people called Fans. Liked them. Went to Yorcon I. Had a good time. Attended lots more cons. Had a good time. Started doing fanzines. Liked it. Persuaded onto a Novacon committee. Enjoyed it. Was on several other Novacon committees. Enjoyed them. Helped to run Fan Programme at Conspiracy. Nearly killed me. Chaired two Novacons. Liked it. Back on a Novacon committee again. Enjoying it. Seeking psychiatric help. Need it.

Bernie Evans

I was tempted to say "read last years's", but then thought better of it, it's time I re-wrote this properly anyway! But how do you get 46 years into 10 or so lines? I'll try.

I was born in 1946, in Oldham, grew up physically, had two husbands, 4 daughters and 6 grandchildren at the last count. I didn't grow up mentally and got into fandom in 1980, late by most standards, but I've been making up for it.

This is my 6th Novacon Committee post, I've chaired two, 17 and 20, been treasurer on one and done memberships on all of them except 17, my first. I love playing with databases, so I'm currently doing memberships for Mexicon, and am UK agent for INTERSECTION, the Scottish worldcon in 1995. I also have an involvement with *Critical Wave* and with the BSFG, and my second fanzine will be out real soon now.

Reading, I don't have much time these days, but when I do I like best James White, Iain Banks, Dann/Dozois anthologies, David Gemmell, Terry Pratchett, Steve Baxter, and just about anything else that's printed on a page, or a packet, or...

Carol Morton

I joined the Brum group in 1984 but my interest in SF goes back further than that. It sounds remarkable, but it began when I was forced to read, as part of my O level English Literature, a series of short stories entitled "The Stars and Under" edited by Edmund Crispin. Maybe someone was trying to tell me something. But back to the Brum Group. I was newsletter editor in '86 - possibly the most thankless job in fandom, my husband Tony - the current Brum Group Chairman, was editor the following year, with me as ordinary member on the committee. Then I actually volunteered to be responsible for Twentycon registrations. Things have now gone from bad to worse. I am Secretary on the Brum Group committee, also responsible for programme for this Novacon and have most foolishly agreed to be Chairman of Novacon 23. Take my advice, or pass it on to your children: don't take O level English Literature, look where it's got me.

Steve & Jenny Glover

The Glover eyes first met across a crowded bookshelf in 1977, but it was almost a decade before all four of them attended a con in Birmingham. An early interest in fanzines (both) blossomed into convention running (mainly Steve) and apa writing (mainly Jenny). Almost inevitably (it feels), we ended up editing and producing *Matrix*, the newsletter of the BSFA. Hoping to catch us unawares (obviously a fine old Brum tradition), Helena invited us to do Novacon 22 publications immediately after the X-asm malt whisky tasting. As we had just stopped getting an adrenaline high from *Matrix* deadlines, we foolishly accepted the invitation. We now have spare adrenaline to last us for the next several years, but are looking forward to **Intersection** to re-stock. Glover playtime ranges from playing on the Net (both, although Jenny concentrates on bulletin boards while Steve roams the internet), to learning guitar (Jenny) and weird programming languages with too many semi-colons (Steve).

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT CAT?

Freda Warrington

Picture this: a room decorated all in gothic colours, with dark red walls, black floorboards, red Persian rug, black firegrate with potted palms and several large china leopards keeping guard. A slender woman dressed in Indian cotton and crushed velvet kneels on a rug, laying out Tarot cards on a square of silk in front of the anxious querent. The proceedings are watched by five cats, one of whom is pure white, exquisitely beautiful in the Egyptian mould, and has only half a tail.

The Tarot does not predict the future, but it reveals the inner Self of the querent with amazing accuracy. 'The five of cups suggests that the querent is given to worrying over delays and setbacks... her emotional and working life are virtually inextricable from each other...'

Yup, that's me all right. But the point is that the Tarot is only as perceptive as the person interpreting it.

The long, detailed and helpful reading that Storm gave me (when I was feeling down and in need of a sympathetic ear) reveals as much about her as it does about me; that she is deeply interested in her friends, that she loves to spend time and trouble helping them, that she's astoundingly intuitive - not to mention intelligent and constructive in her approach to problems.

This perceptiveness and attention to detail are evident in her work. 'Write what you know' they sanctimoniously tell would-be novelists; 'B-----ks to that!' think fantasy writers. BUT - you think Storm writes fantasy? Wrong! The philosophy and optimism of her books are extensions of her own lifestyle. She DOES write what she knows.

I was asked to describe 'Storm as a person' (as opposed to Storm as a teapot?); I can sum it up by saying she is one of the wisest, kindest, warmest people I know. (Somebody fetch her a bucket, quick!)

It's incredible now to think that the first time I saw her, I daren't speak to her! It was at a pub meeting in London, the first I went to. Storm came in looking about six feet tall with a huge fountain of black hair with white streaks, followed by an entourage of people with white faces, red lips, black hair, seriously black clothes, all looking very mean, moody and unapproachable. I had absolutely no idea who they were, although someone did mutter that that woman in the tight patent leather had Written a Novel.

When one is small and bult like Paddington Bear, it's very hard not to resent someone who is tall and thin with incredibly long legs that look wonderful in skin-tight trousers. (If you've never seen her before, don't worry; you certainly can't miss her!) Storm looked dreadfully intimidating. However, once we'd finally been introduced (at a Novacon disco - not the best place to hold a conversation!) I found out how misleading appearances can be. Far from being a gothic prima donna, she was one of the most approachable, friendly, down-to-earth people you could hope to meet.

I even forgave her for the legs.

We signed each other's books, and I went off to read *The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit* with a sense of trepidation; it's always a touch nerve-wracking when you know the author. Oo-er, what do I say if I don't like it? Should one be tactful or brutally honest? ('Your use of whimsical metaphor was reminiscent of Baudelaire at his most otiose.' 'Oh yeah? Stitch this, you patronising bastard!') But I needn't have worried. I found *Enchantments* absolutely enchanting. A compelling story of beautiful people who were still

human enough to have problems, effortlessly and poetically told. The follow-ups were even better. PHEW!

From the first meeting, Storm quickly became a friend. No apologies for being effusive; anyone else who knows her will say the same. The first thing that you need to know about Storm is that she is Awfully Nice. Her 'style' is not put on: it is just her. She is also - paradoxically - ordinary, with the usual vices; smoking, gin, fattening foods. She may look as if she should be a strict vegan, but visit her house and you will be offered disgusting things like banana cream pie ('We'd better eat the whole thing because my boyfriend doesn't like sweet foods...'). She is very hospitable, and long discussions about all sorts of interesting things are guaranteed to follow. Our working habits, our love lives, religion, fiction, cats, food, life in general: nothing escapes. Many's the hour we've sat comparing notes (OK, bitching) about our respective publishers' foibles!

The second thing you need to know about Storm is that she loves cats. There were five at the last count; Licky, Jerry, Tubsy, Scraps and Runty - the last being the possessor of half a tail. Storm has owned this gorgeous creature for many years. Alas, he was sitting in the kitchen doorway when a draught blew through and slammed the door... Storm found half a tail on the doorstep, but no Runty! Happily, he lived to tell the tale... (Sorry!)

I picture Storm and her lovely cats in her old house, described above, because I haven't yet visited the new one to which she moved recently. She says the decor is horrible, with sixties' carpets and polystyrene tiles; but I am sure, given time, the gothic ambience will return. Storm stunned us all last May by getting married to Mark, a man who is almost as beautiful as she is. The first time I met him, he was wearing black leggings and over those, a pair of jeans which were completely shredded horizontally from top to bottom and held together only by the seams. After spending some time helping a friend to load some equipment into a van, he burst into the room and declared tragically 'I've ripped my jeans!!' 'HOW CAN YOU TELL?' we cried. He laughed. Needless to say, he looked very fetching in this gear, and he and Storm made a perfect couple when they married wearing green crushed velvet, with ivy twined in their hair.

You may have gathered that Storm's religion, like most other things about her, is not conventional. On the contrary, she has the most sensible approach to religion that I've ever encountered. 'Pagans have to work it out for themselves' she said, this being the most simplistic expression of her approach. I soon discovered that many of my own feelings were similar to hers; but that, unlike me, she had the courage of her convictions. All I can say is that she has inspired me to take courage too, and for that I can never thank her enough.

But enough of this serious stuff. The third thing you need to know about Storm is that she loves rock music. She is not just a novelist; she is also involved in rock journalism, and manages two bands, **Litany of Fear** and **Empyrion**. They played at her wedding party, a stunning array of the most gothic and alternative persons I've ever seen. My abiding memory is of one of the lead singers, with ivy in this hair, storming down the length of the hall and threatening to deck the disc jockey if he didn't stop the disco while the bands were playing!

Storm has a lot of friends. A LOT. Because she is so friendly and approachable, she often finds slightly outlandish people attaching themselves to her - you know, the sort who can't tell when they've seriously outstayed their welcome - yet she deals with even the most difficult of folk with patience and humour. Fact four: Storm has a wonderful sense of humour.

Just as well, when a certain acquaintance of ours, as a joke, told a sweet but naive fan Storm fancied him. She must have wondered why a seven-

foot, shambling, grinning stranger was suddenly following her around and trying to hold her hand all evening. When told, she graciously refrained from thumping the perpetrator. She just laughed.

Rock bands, cats, Mark, and friends, take up most of Storm's time. It's miraculous to me how she still finds time to write - but *Sign for the Sacred*, her latest novel, came out at a round seven hundred pages! The sequel is now brewing. If you haven't read her work before, go buy it at Novacon. I can recommend the Wraeththu trilogy and *Burying the Shadow* for a start. And if you're wondering how to introduce yourself to the illustrious guest, go and buy her a gin - and ask her where she got the heavenly cat with half-a-tail.

CREATRIX OF (NEAR) INFINITE VARIETY

K V Bailey

A phrase critics frequently use of her novels is "over the top". In a Stan Nicholls *Interzone* interview, she uses it herself of parts of *The Monstrous Regiment*. Over-the-topness can be exhausting, but its contributions to the pleasures of reading aren't negligible. Rabelais was over the top scatalogically, Swinbourne alliteratively, Lovecraft horrifically. We wouldn't be without them.

In the case of Storm Constantine, when the esoteric or the erotic are in high gear, they perform through a variety of fictional modes and serve a variety of controlled purposes. Take the following from *Hermetech* (R J Somesense is re-defining):

"The pure resonance will be like a mind-expanding drug. You will experience the multi-realities of the Universe, not through years of self-disciplined mind training, not through hallucinogenics, but through the power of your own orgasm! This is truly amazing!'

'Yeah,' Ari said dryly."

Rhetorical repetitiveness, exclamation points, phrases like "multi-realities of the Universe" are symptomatic of the over-the-topness, but the concluding dryness puts hyperbole in its place. At the climax of that novel there is, quite naturally, a sustained run of imagistic flourishes. The Ari-Nate union is "a cosmic explosion" and "Gaiah pauses for a second in her rotation and listens". Even so, after the earth has moved right down to the molecular foundations of its primal ooze, we get a balancing back-track into realism and dryness:

"The Flow fades and vanishes. Sucked into flesh, Ari and Nathan find themselves on a street corner in Sector 23... They are separate beings again, inhabiting the bodies they were born into..."

There's a Virgilian image for sequential over-the-topness - to "pile Ossa upon Pelion" (mountain upon mountain); Constantine can carry off this risky procedure to calculated effect. It happens several times in *Burying the Shadow*. For instance, when the exiled-into-flesh eloim, Gimel, comes to terms with the likewise flesh-entrapped Lord of Light, Sammael, there is a carnal coupling, which is certainly a stylistic Pelion ("These lips had spoken words into the primal chaos of the world; they had sculpted sound into matter, darkness into light".)

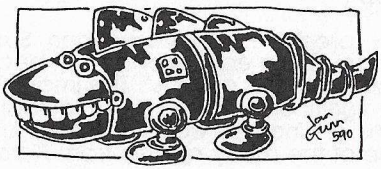
But Ossa is immediately piled on to Pelion when Sammael enables an angelic copulation - or copulation equivalent. They become "one creature; a sphere of light... a spinning cluster of stars". This imaginative extravagance not only moves the story significantly forward, but establishes a valid linkage with Milton's speculations on incorporeal sex ("easy as air on air") which heads that chapter - one of the many quotes from *Paradise Lost* employed

as epigraphs and serving to start up resonances between her story and the whole corpus of seraphic myth.

I said "a risky procedure", and particularly risky when the angelic has to be counter-pointed with the moral, with oppositions and correspondences extended over several hundred pages. Then there's always the possibility of mountains toppling over into bathos. Constantine is aware of this and has a saving sense of the ridiculous, which she demonstrates in, for example, the incident of Gimel's approach to Lord Sammael's Tower of Bale when, in a "farmyard cacophony", she is poked from the threshold by an underling with a broom. Gimel says that whereas, her heart and head full of profundity, she had "been poignantly balanced on the rim of a terrible abyss", she was now "living in a nightmare of farce". The biggest risk of all in that novel is running the angelic and the vampirish in tandem, so that what turns out to be its most powerfully climactic chapter can start, "After a light lunch of blood and lemon juice..." That, despite these risks, *Burying the Shadow* is so accomplished a work, is essentially due to Constantine's complementing the deeds of the seraphic with those of the human, the soulscaper Rayo, who in her final great liberating task deploys her "elemental weapons" which are: "A sword, a fierce and cleansing wave, or a spiritual fire? No, they are a wooden tub of water, a bar of soap, a pack of needles and a basket of cotton reels".

What is successfully, if with hazard, wildly ridden through 400 pages of a novel may be less strenuously cantered through in the corral of a short story. In so slight a tale as "How Enlightenment Came To The Tower" (*Scheherazade* 2), a whole conflict between the darkness of narcissism and the dawn of empathy is worked around images offered by a simple Mariana-like scenario. A not dissimilar motif is at the core of "The Vitreous Suzerain" (*The Gate* 3), a finely crafted story which in space-operatic potential (colonist/alien-biology/psychology) might have filled-out an entire novel. Transition from darkness to liberation is, however, strikingly achieved in some six thousand words. In some stories, she has, as in a diminishing mirror, presented themes of androgyny, of aenoic peoples, of shape-changing - themes which expand largely through her novels - almost as refreshing miniatures: for example, the brother/sister pastorale "A Change of Season", contributed to the Gaiman/Gentle/Kaveny world of *The Weerde*. She is ceaselessly inventive, even when elaborating her own familiar themes. The flying and mobile cities of "Priest of Hands" (*Interzone* 58) are novelly gothic, though the liberating intruder is a familiar figure. In another *Interzone* (#64) story, "Built on Blood" she rehearses the Dionysian archetype, linking it with her mother/daughter theme in a setting of urban decay, disturbingly destabilised by carnival (homage to Mikhail Bakhtin?). When in her *New Worlds* story "Immaculate", she moves into cyberland, her techno-phantom-fusion works expertly; yet a presaging snippet "Lions", in a recent issue of the zine *Inception* proclaims that the tribalism of Wraeththu is still alive.

This all adds up to recognition of a remarkable variety of thematic applications.Storm Constantine's focal imaginative centres are in the esoteric, the exotic, the sexually ambivalent, the magical, but the story-telling energy generated at those centres radiates in many different forms and directions. Euripides wrote that pleasure derives from the variety of things: the pleasures of Storm Constantine's fiction are to be found in the conjunction of its uniqueness and its multi-branching, (near) infinite variety.



ON EDITING STORM CONSTANTINE

Caroline Oakley

My first sight of *Hermetech, Burying the Shadow* and the forthcoming book *Sign for the Sacred* (Headline simultaneous hb and c-format pb publication date 11 February 1993) has always been Storm's second draft of the novel. She has a willing and enthusiastic team of friends who act as initial readers and no doubt make suggestions and comments that are sometimes heeded, sometimes not. My editorial comments are never the first.

Once the manuscript is delivered, and prior commitments allowing, I whizz home anxious to find out just what will be revealed by this particular pile of paper (usually around 500-600 typescript pages). Five or six hours later, I'm on the telephone congratulating Storm on another imaginative coup. First read accomplished, I then begin to read through again at a much slower pace, making notes in the text margins that range from banal comments about phraseology to more substantial queries about the structure and pacing of the novel, or about characterisation. These scribbled notes are typed up into something that Storm can understand - at this stage, my thoughts are really beginning to gel and new ideas and possible solutions for problems begin to form. These, too, are added to the list of comments/queries. What is most important to stress here is, that whatever I may note down is merely my opinion, and like any other reader, nothing I say should be taken as gospel. While I can make concrete observations on why a particular incident should be moved to another point in the plot - to increase dramatic tension, or to avoid making a plot too episodic, or avoid dissipating the readers' sympathies - and justify my point of view, I would always hesitate to say 'change this character, I don't like him'. After all, it is Storm's world and she must populate it with those she thinks fit. After all, the next reader may not find him so objectionable... I suppose that I really regard myself as doing the same job as a producer/engineer would in the music business - I'm there to polish the raw material in a positive way, nothing more. I hope that this is how Storm sees me too!

The manuscript and notes are now parcelled up and sent along to Storm. Meanwhile, we will also have been working on the book jacket, which is one of the most important selling tools we have to exploit.

After the first read through, if not before, I will have had to brief Headline's designers on the jacket approach we would like to follow. Storm and I collaborate very closely on artwork: for *Hermetech* and *Sign for the Sacred* Storm suggested an artist whom we took on and commissioned. This doesn't always work and for *Burying the Shadow*, having been unable to use the first illustration from Sheer Faith - very interesting, but not a book jacket - the designers went out and found an artist who used much the same style and media and could therefore follow an identical brief. (An aside... one of the advantages of using Sheer Faith was that Carl McCoy's involvement in *Hermetech* opened up the gates to a whole new audience of goth music fans who might previously never have given a Storm Constantine novel a second glance. Subsequent letters have proved that they've gone on to buy more books. This is one small example how the exchange of ideas between Storm and Headline has combined to increase sales). A couple of weeks after briefing, a rough sketch (or, given the media used for *Shadow* and *Sign*, a sketch and a collection of materials) arrives. This is approved by Headline, particularly the sales and marketing departments, and Storm before we give the go-ahead to the artist. A month or two later, the final artwork will arrive in house. This is then photographed and lettering added to produce a mock-up of the hardback jacket and paperback cover to size. Again, the mock-up is approved by Headline and Storm before it goes into production. On *Sign* we went through several alternative images for the

central icon of a triptych before we came up with a solution that satisfied Storm. (This involved bastardizing a painting from one of the less well-known Pre-Raphaelite painters - a favourite from her personal library of reference works - obtaining a transparency from an art gallery, reproducing the transparency and cutting out the detail we wanted to use from the resulting photograph and then incorporating that into the final artwork).

The usual reason for the rejection of illustration material is its perceived potential as a selling tool - how eye catching will the illustration be in A-format size when seen from six feet away, for instance. If the central image is indistinguishable from the background, then it is unlikely the cover will encourage anyone to leap forward and grab the book off the shelf. If I'm at all unsure about a cover illustration, a couple of days seeing an A-format mock up sitting above my desk is enough to sway me one way or other - if it's good, people will comment, when they don't notice it's there...

The same processes are worked through for the blurb - I write one draft, it goes to Storm for comment, comes back to me amended, I have another go at things and eventually we compromise. My intention is to sell the book, to hook the reader, intrigue them, make them have to open the pages and find out what will happen next; Storm's concern is that I'm not turning the book into something it isn't.

Back to the manuscript... Storm will by now have read through all my notes, and with luck won't be fuming at my impertinence. At this point we arrange a date to get together and iron out any problems face to face. I don't do this with all my authors, but different people have different ways of working and to talk things through works best with Storm. We spend a full day at it and it is time well spent. By discussing points at issue, we can exchange ideas and explore possible ways of expanding certain aspects of the novel and cutting others, of making sure that any didactic points don't obscure the storyline and check that what Storm intends to say actually comes across to someone who isn't aware of all that has gone before and subsequently been cut from the manuscript. Very often, an objective eye spots gaps in a plot that the author's memory has filled in for them even though they are no longer part of the text. Not much re-writing gets done here, but lots of ideas are noted down for future reference. Some of our joint solutions appear almost verbatim in the revised manuscript, and often the germ of an idea will have grown into something quite different but equally effective. It is an opportunity for me to make clear any points that I might have expressed clumsily on paper - and for Storm to ask what on earth I was getting at on page 101. Misunderstandings can often undermine a good working relationship - talking avoids this.

When I'm back in the office, Storm gets down to the re-writes and I select a copy-editor for the book. Once I have read through the re-writes and made some minor adjustments, done a little line editing, the copy-editor goes into action marking up the text for the printer. Next, the copy-edited manuscript goes back to Storm for her final approval. This achieved, the novel is ready to go to press.

And that's it, really, bar the shouting - of course, there are all sorts of collaborations that also go on concerning publicity and marketing efforts, but that is really another area of expertise. I do put in my five pence worth, and so does Storm, but the real grass roots work is done by another member of the Headline team.

This hasn't been a critical treatise, but I hope it's been a bit of an insight into what really goes on behind the closed doors. If you want to know more, go ahead and ask - I'll be somewhere near the bar clutching a pint of bitter.

STORM CONSTANTINE: AN OVERVIEW

Maureen Speller

If the Wraeththu novels made Storm Constantine's reputation, they have also served at times to obscure the complex nature of her writing. It may be that the cult following engendered by the Wraeththu trilogy has caused some readers to shy away from her work as a whole - a certain stratum of the reading public is notoriously critical of anything which encourages activity beyond the immediate engagement with the text - and it is true that Constantine's work has not attracted the critical attention it deserves. Far from being merely an apologist for or promoter of the New Goths, Constantine instead engages with that most fundamental problem in Science Fiction writing, the shape of our future. And yet, in doing so, she seems to turn her back on the current fashion in SF writing for immediacy and introspection, instead turning to landscapes and images which would, to many, sit more comfortably in a fantasy novel. Within this setting, the suggestions she offers for humanity's chances of survival are sometimes radical, sometimes ill-conceived, sometimes surprisingly banal, but no matter how she addresses the question, the answers she offers are provocative and ought to engage the reader in a fierce mental dialogue.

Constantine achieved prominence with the Wraeththu trilogy: *The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit, The Bewitchments of Love and Hate, The Fulfilments of Fate and Desire*. Constantine's premise was that the Wraeththu, an androgynous mutation of humankind, blessed also with various magical capabilities, would gradually supplant humankind on the Earth. It is an attractive and ingenious idea, one rich with potential for exploring the nature of sexuality and the twin roles of the insider and outsider in a society and yet I feel that Constantine never entirely got to grips with her premise. Too many questions were left unanswered for my liking, too many issues were sidestepped.

Perhaps the biggest difficulty lies in the fact that despite the Wraeththu being apparently androgynous, everything about their society and their very nature is so masculine it is difficult to think of them as anything but male. Even though their ethereal beauty is constantly emphasised, and it is later revealed that the Wraeththu can bear children of their own as well as propagate their species through infecting humans with their blood, it is difficult to shed the notion that Constantine is, in fact, exploring the ultimate misogynistic homosexual society rather than something truly androgynous. (It is tempting, though I suspect unsound, to extend the metaphor of inception through infection and thus see the Wraeththu as the ultimate post-AIDS generation).

Time and again, it is emphasised that most Wreaththu do not like women, that most Wraeththu fear the anima, the female component, in themselves and are suspicious of those Wraeththu who accept the femaleness in themselves and allow it to dominate. One can inevitably draw analogies with our own society and the emphasis on men rejecting the gentler, more intuitive side of their nature, and then begin to wonder whether the Wraeththu are quite so superior as they think themselves. Constantine's ultimate solution to what is clearly a problem, introducing what is effectively a race of female Wraeththu, the Kamagrain, leaves us no nearer solving the dilemma of whether a truly androgynous being, and by extension, an androgynous society, can exist.

On a more global scale, the territorial struggles among the various Wraeththu tribes which quickly spring up suggest that they have learned little from their contact with humankind. In a comparatively short time, large empires have sprung up, peopled by Wraeththu of all shades of political

belief. The greater part of the novels is concerned with trafficking between the various nations and the attempt to bind the Wraeththu together as one unity. As an enterprise it seems as doomed as the attempt to unite Europe and about as petty. Probably the only difference is that the Wraeththu are capable of magic of one sort of another, particularly telepathy and also sex magic. The Wraeththu are mystical beings, much more so than humans, but even then, the shades of their beliefs mirror those of the world they affect to despise. I wonder if I am the only person uncomfortable with the ultimate requirement of a Trinity to rule this rather squalid new world?

Constantine's next two novels, *The Monstrous Regiment* and *Aleph* sought to redress the balance by portraying a society in which women have achieved ascendancy, subjugating men until they are little more than slaves. Indeed, in the City, marriage is permitted only between women, although out on the Marshes, society is slightly more liberal and husbands are permitted. The Dominatrix, a title replete with sexual ambiguity, on this world if not on Artemis, intends however to remove men completely from Artemisian society and *The Monstrous Regiment* concerns the admittedly puny efforts of one man, and later one woman, to thwart this most radical of solutions.

However, I doubt I'm the only one who feels this novel to be little more than a parodic exploration and refutation of radical feminist separatist beliefs. No attempt is made to offer a reasoned defence of the separatist view, it is automatically something to be combatted, more for the simple fact of its extremity than because it is a flawed view. It is important to the plot that the matriarchal system is seen to be doubted even by the majority of women who operate it, but I can detect little sense that the revolt is genuine rather than a convenient plot coupon. The sexual and political issues are skirted around rather than confronted, although Constantine makes a very reasonable attempt at portraying a comfortably bi-sexual society rather than the androgynous society of the Wraeththu.

It's difficult to comment on *Aleph*. Set shortly after the overthrow of the Dominatrix, it portrays refugees from the Marsh and the City trying to build a new life, with all parties on an equal footing. Fiction can rarely exist without conflict or tension of some sort, and Constantine is obliged to disturb the utopian vision; she introduces an off-world tourist pioneer, quite the most vacuous character in the entire Constantine oeuvre, and also a mysterious entity lurking in a cave just outside the new settlement. Primarily, the story revolves round solving the mystery of this entity's existence and any attempts to discuss the sexual politics of the newly formed society are firmly relegated to the background, eschewed in favour of a flimsy and not terribly interesting adventure story. Of all her books, this is the least successful.

With *Hermetech*, Constantine ventured into a future territory perhaps more familiar to the Science Fiction rather than the fantasy reader, creating an Earth ravaged by ecological disaster, now being fought over by opposing green factions, Naturotech and Tech-Green, each with solutions for Earth's problems. Ari Famber represents perhaps the most radical approach, genetically engineered to heal the world through the powers she will attain at puberty.

Of all the future possibilities offered by Constantine, this is surprisingly the one I find most believable, perhaps because much of it is closer to our own present predicament. As I suggested earlier, for all the trappings of fantasy, Constantine very often deals with issues more familiar to the reader of speculative fiction than those used to magical sagas, and the two seem to sit uneasily together. As the millennium draws nigh, our society is showing a much deeper interest in mysticism, in the Earth's innate powers as an entity. The maverick scientist, James Lovelock, has identified Earth as Gaia, a global entity rejecting the fragmentary existence we normally ascribe to it. *Hermetech* embodies much of this, alongside gene manipulation and the Traveller phenomenon. To discuss the solution for the Earth's problems would

be to spoil the story's denouement. Suffice it to say, this is the part I find least probable, least possible, but it in no way spoils the journey to the finale.

Constantine's most recent novel, *Burying the Shadow*, returns, in some measure to the Gothic preoccupations of the Wraeththu novels. Again we have a dichotomy inherent in society, but this time expressed in the relationship between the mysterious artisans, quite clearly vampires though the word is used only in the cover blurb, and their human patrons. Drawing heavily on Milton's *Paradise Lost* for its inspiration. I doubt whether "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour", but the concept of the Fallen Host coming to Earth as something of a vampiric nature is rather engaging though once again, the adventures in which they participate, to solve the mystery behind eloim deaths and suicides (a real problem if you're supposedly immortal) are somewhat scanty.

It has to be faced that plotting, the movement of characters from A to B, either physically or spiritually, with adventures en route, is not Constantine's greatest strength, though *Hermetech* clearly shows that she does have the ability to knit together a very tight plot if so minded. However, this deficiency is more than compensated for by her extraordinary ability to create absorbing characters. A tendency to the sentimental and romantic means that even her most unpleasant characters are redeemed one way or another which might be considered a weakness but, on the whole, the reader becomes so involved with the characters that this is welcomed rather than seen as a disappointment. In all her work, I can think of only two overtly evil and irredeemable characters, the Dominatrix and Ponclast, a depraved warlord in the second Wraeththu novel, and both meet a very unpleasant end. Which doesn't mean that Constantine isn't prepared to kill off her characters; she just doesn't do it very often.

Instead, we have such characters as Calanthe, the chaotic figure who stalks the Wraeththu novels, wild and unpredictable, but ultimately the lynch-pin of the series. He stalks the landscape of a Wraeththu-dominated world; loving; leaving; turning the world upside down before accepting his role as part of the ruling Triune. Thoughout all this, it is impossible to dislike him. The same goes for other characters who nominally line up on the same side as the bad guys, like the vampire Gimel Metatronim, who consistently acts within a moral framework which many might find repugnant but who is likeable for her consistency and refusal to compromise. As for the "good guys", while they are sometimes only too flawless, one accepts this, glosses over it. Ari Famber, the archetypal omnicompetent female character with problems, is probably the best example of this. At a time when much of the SF genre has once again become so very plot-driven, it is pleasing to discover that someone still cares about characters and this is undoubtedly Constantine's greatest strength.

Pat Cadigan characterised Storm Constantine's writing as "wild, bold, exotic good stuff" and this, I think, is as fair a description of it as you're likely to see. Whether, as Bruce Sterling rather heatedly puts it, she "ignores every bourgeois rule of fiction" is less certain. To my mind, there is nothing more bourgeois than an happy ever after, though that doesn't undervalue the satisfactory resolution in any way. Having suffered with the characters through their torments, I think the least we can expect is some reassurance that things are going to be alright. Constantine doesn't write the bleak, empty fiction so beloved of some writers - sometimes, it must be admitted, she swings to quite the opposite extreme - but for all the faults, and I can't deny their existence, there is a satisfaction to be derived from reading her work, even if, like me, you end up arguing with it all the way through.

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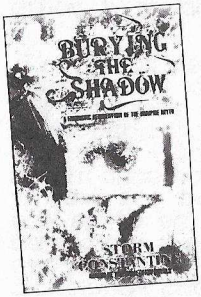

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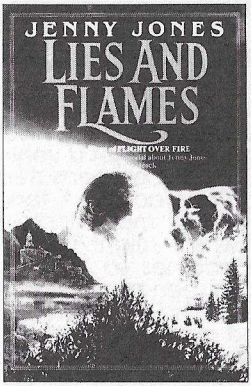

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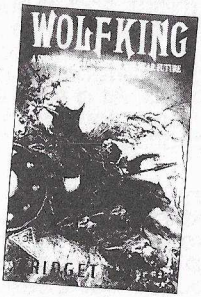

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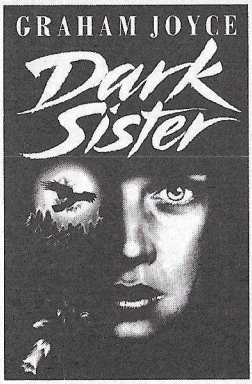

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STORM CONSTANTINE: AN INTERVIEW

Graham Joyce

Storm Constantine is a showstopper. A spellbinder. She is an exotic, a black cat, essentially feline right down to her retractable fingernails. One part Cleopatra, one part gothic priestess, one part delicious vampire. Both muse and musee, she is, from a distance at least, a little unnerving.

But that, of course, is all male fantasy - permissive because it's invited - and beyond the heady image is a refeshingly open, honest and good-humoured writer. No, she doesn't hiss, spit or scratch - who told you that she did? You only thought that from her publicity photos - she answers everything with a disarming frankness. She's not at all pompous or self-absorbed in the way that some writers can be: on the contrary, she's rather self-mocking and gently ironic.

Author of seven novels, her latest, *Burying the Shadow*, was published in February by Headline. The presiding interest in all of her work lies in the subject of gender, in the sexual and power relations between men and women, and a dominant motif in much of it is that of the hermaphrodite. Although one of her recent novels, *Hermetech*, was billed as SF, she's writing firmly in the fantasy tradition.

"That's right. My roots are more in mythology than SF."

I remind her that she was reported in one English journal as saying that "SF has always been based on scientific fact, whereas fantasy is skipping around the forest". What was she talking about? She pretends to be exasperated.

"I assume the writer of that article was referring to the Tolkein tradition of Fantasy. Or I could have been hung over, since it was a Saturday morning telephone interview... but anyway I dislike typical high camp sword and sorcery. Basically it's got no punch. To me, fantasy should be metaphorical, allegorical, like the function of the myths, commenting on life as it is using pictures, illustration, weaving words. And to me, writing this dreadful, coy drivel about elves and goblins and people falling in love and never expressing that physically is just ridiculous. I hate it. I loathe it. If I see another talking horse... what's the point? What's it saying? Nothing!"

So if Tolkein is not necessarily a moving force in her influences, what reading or screen experiences had an impact on her when she was very young?

"*The Saint* and *Supercar*; and the *Tall Book of Makebelieve*, which I've still got. It has surreal illustrations, quite scary. Everything else I had has got lost along the way, but I've still got that. There was a story where a girl was made to be thin and flat so she could be dragged under a door by her brother and sister. The idea and the illustration was revolting to me. Very peculiar. Yes, a big influence.

"Then in my teens I saw *Carnival of Souls* at the movies. Couldn't sleep for three nights after seeing that film. About this time I discovered Michael Moorcock. I collected his stuff avidly. I couldn't believe stuff like that existed: it was what I'd always wanted to read. Then I got into Tanith Lee and Jane Gaskill and Jack Vance and..."

Storm's writing could never be assured of dodging the subject of sex. Compared with much fantasy writing it is rare - even radical - in its frankness. Her characters have genitals, for sure, and some of them have more genitals than most of us. The Wraeththu trilogy is populated by hermaphrodite tribes, and the third book, *The Fulfilments of Fate and Desire*, comes with an appendix to explain how the Wraeththu manage the tricky business of intercourse, reproduction and sexual communion. The theme is

explored in more depth, and with greater dexterity, in the later *Hermetech*. Here the author relies less on the Fantastic Hemaphrodite as a "given" condition of the fiction, and more on the psychological and technological possibilities of hermaphrodite awareness. So why the fascination with the dual-sexed being?

"It stems from when I was researching into occult writings and alchemical doctrines for an idea I'd had for a book. The message seemed to suggest everyone is hermaphroditic spiritually. I wondered what it would be like if that was expressed physically. That was where the Wraeththu idea came from. I wanted to do something where my characters were people as people, not as genders. And you love people as people, not because of what gender they are, or what combination of sexes they are. I wanted to write something against barriers that prevent people showing affection whatever their sexuality. I don't think that sexuality should be regarded as shameful.

"It;s important to be in touch with the opposite side of your own sexuality. More so for men, because as women we often have to draw on a masculine strength within us to get by in life, because we get a lot of knocks. It's much harder for men to find their *anima*, their female side because they've always being told *big boys don't cry, weakling, sissy, puff*. Men are frightened to be seen as feminine, but you don't have to be effeminate to be feminine. Men have to find a way to be *strong enough* to cry, *strong enough* to be nurturers; and women have to be strong enough to let them".

It's a sound feminist argument. But Storm rejects the label, and becomes slightly waspish on the subject. Her novel *Monstrous Regiment*, which deals with the tyranny of a planet dominated by women, drew flak from the sisters.

"That book was trying to show it's not right for one sex to be dominant, but I admit now I was a bit ham-fisted with the material. I was trying to say that power from *within* is superior to power *over*, but some radical feminists were saying" (here she affects a shrill voice) "'it's anti-women, it's anti-women!' But I'm trying to say there's more to it than furiously hacking off your hair and trying to imitate men: *celebrate* your femininity!

"I've never had the support of the radical feminists anyway, because I used the male pronouns for my Wraeththu hermaphrodites. I thought it had more impact to have superficially male characters doing feminine things."

The question of the use of personal pronouns was further explored in *Hermetech* by the adaptation of two new pronouns: SHe and hir.

"Actually, Timothy Leary invented the pronouns, and I used them. I didn't do it to answer the critique we were just talking about, but because I wanted to experiment. But they were awkward to work with and awkward to read. I don't think I'll use them again".

It has to be remarked that Storm likes to do amazing things to men's anatomies in her books. What we frequently get is the fictional transformation of male sexuality (for example in *Hermetech*, a male prostitute is transformed, through surgery, into a kind of erotic coffee table). Why does she want to do these things to her men?

"That was a bit tongue in cheek... It was meant to be comical, the city where it happened was like DisneyWorld, not a real city. A very learned professor came up to me and told me that what I'd done with the Wraeththu hermaphrodites was biologically impossible, but that's the difference between SF and Fantasy and Zambia (the male prostitute) was my answer".

But whether the sex is exotic or conventional, to find the subject dealt with in fantasy writing is the exception rather than the norm. Avoidance is the

golden rule of high fantasy. Characters never seem motivated by the ordinary pull of human relationships. So what does she think are the components of a good novel?

"A good novel for me involves all aspects of my life, fear, hope, sexuality, sadness, joy... so if you're writing or reading something avoiding any of those facets, what does it say about your life?"

Her most recent book, *Burying the Shadow*, signals a change of theme, and in particular explores the nature and character of the angels. Its subject matter is irrestible, and it opens with the inspirational line "A renegade burned out among the stars last night."

"Yes, it's about fallen angels. There's a lot of Jungian psychology in there, and I've steeped myself in Milton's *Paradise Lost* lately to find material for the characters. I've drawn more from the Enochian myth than from Biblical myth, where the angels fell from grace because they wanted to teach Man about magic, medicine, herbalism, science and art. So the fallen angels, the Eloim, have to hide on earth after having been slung out of heaven. They have to take physical, fleshly form to do this, and the only way they can survive in fleshly form is by the drinking of human blood.. But I don't use the word 'vampire' in the novel once!"

Is this a complete departure from previous novels?

"Not entirely. Some of the Enochian and Angelic magic is there in the Wraeththu novels. There is the theme of visualising and self-generating angelic forms, externalising inner facets of yourself, dealing with them as metaphors. From my research, I've established that all ritual ceremonies, be they religious or magical, only use the external forms of candles, incense, etc., as props for bringing forth the inner power. The props are just there to help you believe in yourself.

"On the other hand, it is something of a move away. There are no hermaphrodites in *Burying the Shadow*."

With the release of this, her seventh novel, Storm Constantine has hardened her attitude towards the publishing world. She waves an arm dismissively through the air and a zillion silver bangles arc in the light. "Accountants. They're all run by accountants. The creative people in publishing these days have lost all their power. The people running the show don't actually *care* what goes into a book. They want to tell you they're taking a risk, but where's the risk? If you sell, they've scored, if you don't sell, well, it's all absorbed as a tax-loss against those who do well. What they won't risk is *promoting* you. As an industry, the writers struggling at the bottom are just the plebs, the old-fashioned piece-workers."

She is, however, much happier with her new publishers, Headline, who pride themselves on their author-friendly approach, consulting with their writers every step of the way. "Every book they bring out" she says "is special to them. What more can you ask?"

Does the process of writing become easier with each successive novel?

"Not really. It gets harder the more you do, because you raise your own nexpectations and standards. The first three books I wrote knowing nothing at all about the publishing industry; I'd never met a critic in my life, never mind having read a review of my own work. I enjoyed writing. I wasn't conscious of an audience, or even of my own standards. I wrote because I loved writing. *Now* I'm aware of that person with the knife, just waiting: *come on, lady, come on, finish that book, we're waiting for you.* So you become very conscious of how important it is to better your previous work, and, if you let it, that can hold you back.

"I've lost that innocent pleasure I had in writing. In a way, it's something I regret immensely, but it's something to do with the way the industry works".

This produces a sigh which makes me want to say, *who is that critic with the knife - let's get him!* But do critics really have that much power?

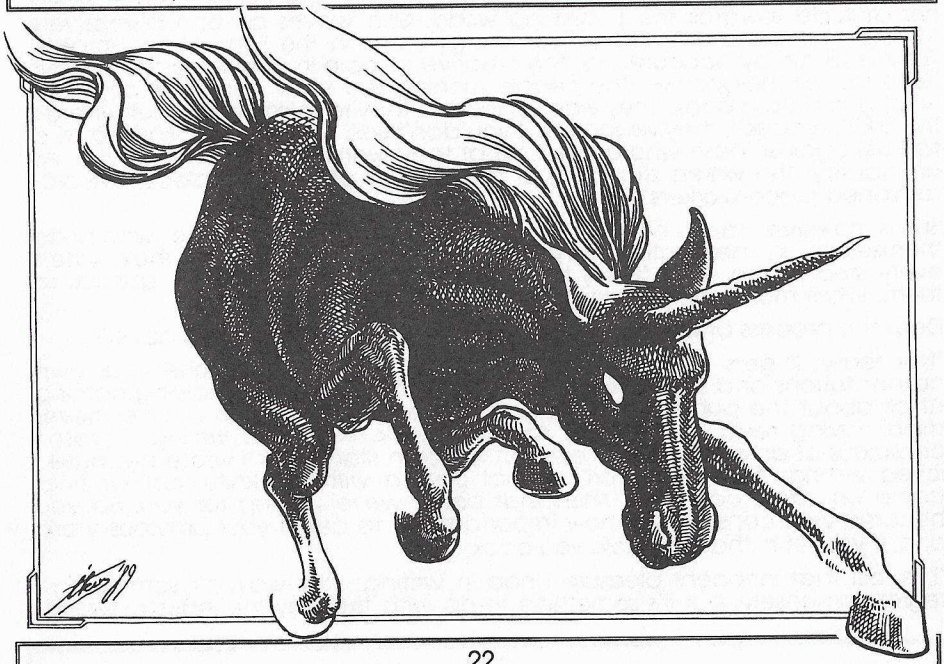
"I know my own strengths and weaknesses, and I don't mind being told areas I could improve, but if I read a negative review which I think unjustified, it cuts me to the bone. It hurts mainly because I have no right of reply, that's what seems so unfair. That in one sentence someone can dismiss a year's work! And if you try to reply, you only end up looking foolish.

"I don't know why, but it's the negative stuff that sticks. You might get twelve wonderful letters from readers, but then if a reviewer sticks the knife in, that's what you remember. Other writers say the same. It's like relationships after they split up: you remember the bad stuff more than the good."

Storm does actually have a life outside of writing. She produces rock music reviews, and manages a rock band. One London band have recently been inspired by *Hermetech* and have a track entitled "A Song For Ari" on their new album. But even though these things exist to distract her, writing is where she's most at home. It's not as if there's any choice about it: she regards writing as a compulsion, a neurotic agitation which produces the pearl. "If we weren't writing, we'd be in padded cells". And she looks at you obliquely, as if trying to assess how seriously you're going to take that point. "Yes. Writing stems our manias".

There is indeed an aura, a psychedelic halo of endless creativity about her. I keep thinking about that figure with the knife waiting for each new book, and I realise what a lonely road a writer's life can be, but I know that Storm will face it each time a new novel is released from the spinning halo. Sustained by the fertility of her imagination, and steeled by experience, she is a true writer: one who writes because she must.

We are grateful both to Graham Joyce and to Andy Porter of SF Chronicle for permission to reprint this piece from the July 1992 issue.



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"Did You Ever See Oysters Walking Down The Stairs?" 1990 *More Tales from the Forbidden Planet*.
"The Heart of Fairen Death" 1990 *Weird Tales* (USA).
"Lacrymata" 1990 *Deathwing*, GW Books.
"The Vitreous Suzerain" 1991 *The Gate #2*.
"The College Spirit" 1991 *Temps*, Penguin.
"Immaculate" 1991 *New Worlds*. Gollancz.
"They Hunt..." 1989, *Drabble Project #1*.
"The Deliveress" 1992 *Villains*, Penguin.
"A Change of Season" 1992 *Weerde*, Penguin.
"Priest of Hands" 1992 *Interzone*.

Forthcoming:

"Poisoning the Sea" 1992 *Dedalus Book of Femmes Fatale*.
"The Law of Being" 1992 *Eurotemps (Temps 2)*, Penguin.
"The Preservation" 1992 *REM Magazine #2*.
"How Enlightenment Came to the Tower" 1992 *Scheherazade Magazine #2*.

Magazine Interviews:

GM Magazine (January 1989)
New Voice (October 1991) with Dan Critchfield. This is the alternative news and arts magazine of Hofstra University (available from Room 201, Student Centre, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550)
Interzone 58 (April 1992) with Stan Nicholls
Mother of Sighs (Lorraine Simnot, 35 Summertown Road, Ibrox, Glasgow G51 2QA)
Inception 3 (Steve Jeffery and Vikki Lee France, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA)
Dreams From Within (Darren Bentley, 74 Monteith Crescent, Boston, Lincs. PE21 9AU)
SF Chronicle, (July 1992) (reprinted here)

Interviews by Storm Constantine

Storm is manager for two bands, *Litany of Fear* and *Empyrean*, and is pretty much involved in the alternative music scene. She appears in Mick Mercer's book, *Gothic Rock*, and has interviewed Carl McCoy (*Fields of the Nephilim*), *Creaming Jesus* and *Every New Dead Ghost* for *Siren* magazine, both of which are available from Pegasus Publishing (Bradford Court, Bradford Street, Birmingham B12 ONS).

Fanzine Articles

Inception 4 "Seraphilia: The Allure of Angels", *Inception 5* "Building Worlds", *Arrows of Desire 4* "Fear and Loathing in Hate City" and *Dreams from Within 11* "The Everness Kiss: Courting the Vampyre", *Inception 6* "Lions", *Paragenesis* "By the River of If Only" – a revised version appeared in *Fear* (January 1991) & *Critical Wave 10* "The 13th Key". As well as the Souvenir Book "When the Angels Came", which you should have received in your Registration Pack, a short story "An Elemental Tale", donated to *Inception* is available at the con.

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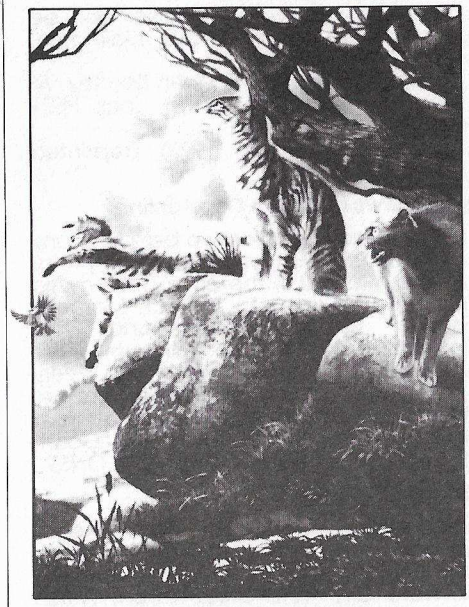

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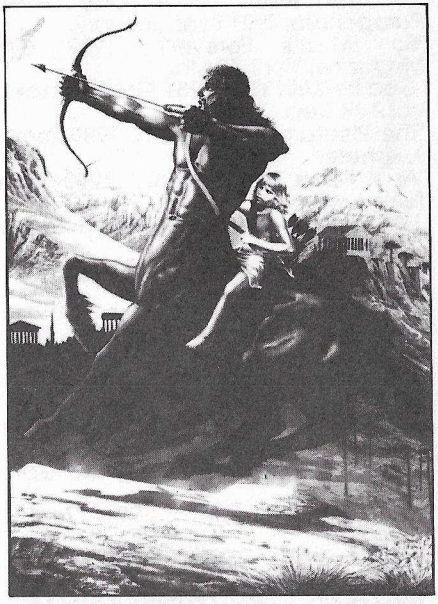

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LEGEND

THE MUSICAL CONNECTION

Storm Constantine

When people find out that I manage bands, as well as write full-time for a living, their first exclamation is usually 'How do you find the time?' I think the answer to that is probably, 'I don't!' One creative project spills over into the time of another, deadlines get pushed further into the future, but somehow, in some bizarre way, things simply get done, and I can reach a point (like now) when a book has been completed, the bands' latest mailings have been sent out, the next band fanzines are in the planning stages, and I'm about to embark on a new book. My desk is clear! This is never right!

Ever since I discovered rock music in my early teens, I have been involved with bands, originally contributing written and art work, which later progressed into taking a more organisational role. While I was writing the Wraeththu trilogy, I had a band living in the house with me, 'The Closets of Emily Child', who made a token appearance in *Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit*. Unfortunately, they didn't stay together for very long, although they did produce a demo tape, for which I designed the cover insert. Soon after the Closets broke up, I acquired a new musical lodger who, at the time, worked under the name Yash Byzantium. Together, we formed a writers/musicians group known as Thirteenth Key. The project was vaster than the resources or time we had at our disposal - our ideas were ambitious and, in retrospect, rather naive - but we did produce a magazine, *Paragenesis*, a video *Scrying of Continuum*, which was shown at SFconventions in 1988, and a tape of Yash's music, including the soundtrack to the video, called *Eyespeech*. The tape was influenced by both Gothic and Industrial music. Yash used his multitude of synths and samplers to produce a very tribal sound. We had plans to embark upon new projects, but unfortunately, Thirteenth Key disintegrated amid a riot of bad feeling. A minority of the members wanted to make money out of the project, while Yash and I had already realised we lacked the capital to run Thirteenth Key as anything but a non-profit-making venture. As far as we were concerned, the motivations behind it were creativity and enjoyment rather than profit and gain. Yash and I continued to work together on music to accompany the Wraeththu books but, because of individual commitments to work and other projects, our ideas were never realised.

Yash later joined a new band, 'Litany of Fear', who were then obviously influenced by 'Sisters of Mercy' and 'Fields of the Nephilim'. Their sound was raw, and they used the traditional Goth drum machine instead of a live drummer. Yash's love of industrial and rave music eventually led him to leave the band and join another, which was more to his musical taste. He moved out of my house round about the same time, and we lost contact for a while. 'Litany' didn't bother to replace Yash, but continued to write new material without keyboards - which produced a much harder sound. Their music and stage presence improved all the time. On New Year's Eve, two years ago, Skez, the 'Litany''s vocalist, was talking to me in the pub about how he felt the band lacked organisation, and needed a properly-run information service. I offered to help, get the fan club running, and the information service 'Hacking Reality' was born.

Skez and I produced regular mailings to keep members in touch with what the band were doing, and Skez's partner, Sallyann (who made an appearance in my story 'Built on Blood', which was printed recently in *Interzone*), produced an impressive fanzine, called *Visionary Still*. The band supported 'The Ancestry' on a U.K. tour, and it was at a gig in Birmingham, following that tour, that I first met the next band I would work with, 'Empyrean'.

'Empyrean' began life as 'Realms of Flame', but changed their name even before they played live. Richard and Mark (guitarist and drummer respectively) approached me about supporting 'The Litany' on any future gigs. Skez and I went to watch them practice at Rich Bitch studios, and were both impressed by what we saw and heard. Having a 'live' drummer made their sound incredibly powerful. 'Empyrean' were also 'Nephilim'-influenced to begin with, and when I first saw them, Neil, the vocalist/guitarist, had only been in the front-man position for a short time, following their original vocalist's departure. Still, it was obvious to me that great potential was there. As musicians, 'Empyrean' were very accomplished and they were clearly extremely dedicated to their work.

After the practice, 'Empyrean' asked me if I'd be interested in managing them. I was: very much so. A meeting was arranged to take place at my house a few days later, where we decided how we would work together. Because of my writing commitments, my time is limited, so I tend to handle the P.R. and information service side of things, more than actually spend hours on the telephone trying to arrange gigs.

About a year ago, 'Litany''s guitarist, Kev, left England to work in the States for a while. During this time, 'Litany' stopped playing live, although they continued to write new material, and tapes went winging back and forth across the Atlantic, so that Kev could add guitar to the music.

At the same time, 'Empyrean' were gigging extensively throughout the U.K., building up a healthy following. Neil and I set up 'Empyrean''s information service *Ad Infinitum*, which has an ever-expanding membership. Over the last twelve months, 'Empyrean' have refined their sound and, as Neil has become more confident as a vocalist, the comparisons with the 'Nephilim' have decreased. 'Empyraen''s first demo, *Realms of Flame* was recorded early this year, and has sold well. Soon, they will be going into the studio to record a new e.p., *At the Arches of Prophecy and Delirium*.

'Litany of Fear' are now back together again, with the addition of a live drummer, which has added dynamism and guts to their music. Their first few gigs with the new line-up have gone very well, a cassette single, *Deja Voodoo*, is selling strongly, and they hope to be bringing out their first c.d. album, *Intravenus Porn*, at the end of November.

As for my own musical projects, I have recently started working with Yash Byzantium again, the result of which you should be able to hear at this convention. Yash has written music to three sections of *Hermetech*, which will be interspersed with readings by myself of the relevant extracts. The tape of this will be available through my information service, *Inception*, who intend to produce a magazine to accompany it.

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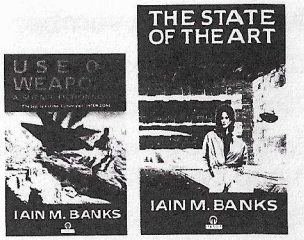

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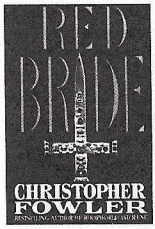

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PARTY PARTY!!

Please come and celebrate the many talents of the Orbit list by meeting our authors on Saturday 7th November at 8.00pm

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PROGRAMME

Friday 6th November

5.00pm "Freejack"

7.00pm Opening Ceremony

8.00pm Party. Hosted by Intersection.

10.00pm "Night of the Comet"

There will be an all night video programme in the Waverley Suite (on the sixth floor) for all you insomniacs.

Saturday 7th November

10.00am Ian Stewart Scientific Talk

11.15am Book Auction

1.15pm "Why is there so much humour in Fantasy and not SF and does SF in fact lend itself to humour"

2.30pm BSFA Meeting

3.00pm Guest of Honour Interview

4.15pm Heirs of Tolkein Roadshow

5.30pm "Strange Invaders"

7.30pm Friends of Foundation EGM

8.00pm Party. Hosted by Orbit

10.00pm Disco

Don't forget the all night video programme when the disco ends.

Sunday 8th November

10.00am Panel Discussion of Storm's Wraeththu Books

11.15am Art Auction

1.15pm "What is it like to live with a creative person whilst they are creating?"

2.30pm TAFF

3.45pm Awards Ceremony

5.00pm Book Discussion Panel

6.15pm "What is it like to write on a collaboration rather than writing on your own?"

7.30pm Debate

8.45pm Auction

?.?? People's Disco

FILM NOTES

Tony Berry

Strange Invaders 1983

Affectionate satire of the paranoia of '50s SF movies. Following a body-snatcher theme, it centres on a mid-western township taken over by aliens in 1958 for a 25-year study of human behaviour. The ETs return to modern New York in search of two of their number who stayed behind. Also in pursuit is a professor who unknowingly was married to one of them and fathered another. Well made on a relatively low budget it combines SF, humour and horror.

Frogs 1972

Down in the Florida swamps something stirs - and goes "ribbit". Yes, the frogs and hopping mad in this revenge-of-nature film, and not only them, but just about everything that creeps, crawls or slithers is out to get Ray Milland and friends. The director presents events in a straightforward manner and thankfully refrains from using blow-up shots or slow motion (remember "Night of the Lepus"?) This makes for an interesting and above average film of this type.

The Car 1977

A big, black, driverless limousine goes around killing people, and no explanation whatsoever is given as to why or how it does so. Sounds like a perfect late-night convention film to me.

Freejack 1992

Racing driver Emilio Estevez is about to die in a crash. But just before he becomes pizza, he is transported into the year 2009 by Mick Jagger, who does this sort of thing for a living. The idea is to erase the mind of the transported person (Freejack) and replace it with that of some rich bastard who is dying, so they can live on. But before his persona can be wiped Estevez escapes, and the chase is on. Some critics slated this film when it came out, but they obviously had no sense of humour. Lots of action and enough gags to keep things rolling along. Can Estevez, helped by his former girlfriend, find out who wants his body before Mick gets his hands on it? Anthony Hopkins plays Mr Big, and look out for Jerry Hall in a cameo. Great fun.

Flatliners 1990

Brat-pack movie in which medical students, led by Kiefer Sutherland, try and find out what happens after death. They take it in turns to have their hearts stopped, and after a period clinically dead, are revived by the others. But instead of learning if there is an afterlife, something closer to home starts to give them a bad time. The film looks good with lots of moody photography, all sombre light and shadow, and the young doctors look suitably agonised. What it boils down to in the end is a stylish morality tale.

The above notes for "Freejack" and "Flatliners" are all my own work; the rest are cribbed mercilessly from the *Aurum SF Film Book* and Peter Nicholls's *Fantastic Cinema*, both of which you should buy.

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SCIENCE FICTION EDUCATION

Vernon Brown

On the next few pages you will find a GCSE Question Paper. You should also find a loose A4 sized Answer Paper. If you don't have one, please check with Registration.

Most questions in this Quiz require a short answer, but for various reasons this cannot be a written one. So each question has been given several "outline answers", which can be in full or abbreviated. The idea is that you match your answer to one of the "outline" ones. It's a bit like being given specifications for making a key, together with five different locks. If the key is made correctly, it will fit one of the locks, if it is not, it won't. However, to make the instructions simpler, the terms "question" and "answers" are used, although, strictly speaking, these terms are incorrect.

Instructions

1. Each question on the question paper has several answers.

2. Mark the answer that you think is correct. Each correctly answered question is worth one mark. Many answers are given as Acronyms i.e. initials of words (e.g. VB = Vernon Brown). This is because giving answers in full often makes things much too easy.

2. Now choose which answers you will submit for marking. There are three sections - Section B is easy, Section A is medium and Section C has harder questions. You have to submit two Sections which must include Section A. If you submit Sections A and B you will obtain a GCSE Ordinary Certificate if you pass, if you submit Sections A and C you will gve a GCSE Advanced Certificate if you pass. Pass mark is 40%. Depending on how well you do, you will obtain a Pass or Credit at "O" level, or Pass, Credit or Distinction at "A" level.

4. Having decided which sections to submit, cross out the other one to prevent mistakes.

5. The Answer Paper has numbered and lettered squares corresponding to the questions and answers on your Question Paper. The idea is that you carefully block out with blue or black ink, biro, or felt tip the squares corresponding to the answers you think are correct. DO NOT circle or cross the squares or do anything else, or use pencil, as your paper will not be marked if you do. This is because marking will be done by placing a card mark over your Answer Paper with holes cut in it corresponding with correct answer square. Squares that show through are correctly answered. Signs, pencils, etc., are unsuitable for this type of marking. If you make a mistake, put a large X through the incorrect square.

6. Now complete your Answer Paper. Block out the square corresponding to the sections you have submitted, i.e. A&B or A&C and print your name and address, which we will use as an address label to send you your certificate if you don't collect it on Sunday.

7. Check that all is completed properly and post your answer paper only in the box by reception. Please only fold it once. Make sure that it is posted by 5.00 p.m. on NOVACON Saturday.

8. I will have certificates with me on Sunday - please contact me for them and find out whether you have a prize as well.

9. As an incentive, all Answer Papers submitted will be entered in a free prize draw.

10. Finally, no one else will know how well you have done unless you tell them, so please have a go; you may do better than you think.

GCSE

Question Paper. Please read instructions first

Section A

1. In Stirling's "The Hammer" series, what do soldiers ride?

a) Camels b) Cows c) Dinosaurs d) Dogs e) Horses

2. In Chalker's "Quintara Marathon" series, how many Empires are there?

a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5 e) 6

3. In Pournelle's "Janissaries" books what, or who, is Surinomaz?

a) A Clan chief b) A religion c) A food d) A drug e) A drink

4. In *They Walked Like Men* (Simak) what was the real shape of the aliens?

a) Crystals b) Bowling balls c) Footballs d) Ovens e) Juke boxes

5. "The Little Black Bag" (Kornbluth) is about

a) A G.P.'s medical bag b) A devil's pack c) An evening out d) A genie e) A lawyer's briefcase

6. *The Skylark of Space* (E E Smith) was first published in

a) 1918 b) 1928 c) 1938 d) 1948 e) none of these

7. In *The Alteration* (Amis) what is the State Religion of England?

a) Judaism b) Muslim c) Polytheism d) Protestant e) Roman Catholic

8. A Kzin (Niven) is

a) Doglike b) Foxlike c) Lionlike d) Pantherlike e) Tigerlike

9. Azazel, in Asimov's collection of that name, is how tall?

a) 2mm b) 2cm c) 3m d) 2in e) 2ft

10. A syllogismobile is used to travel

a) Between dimensions b) Between planets c) In space d) In time

11. Who wrote *Phules Company*? (Acronym)

a) AH b) BA c) BS d) HH e) RA

12. *Odd John* was written by (Acronym)

a) JH b) MF c) OS d) RK e) SM

13. *Two Hawks from Earth* was originally published as (Acronym)

a) ATAS b) ACFL c) EF d) SOM e) TGOT

14. Who co-authored *The Enchanted Duplicator* with Bob Shaw (Acronym)?

a) BB b) FF c) HH d) KK e) WW

15. Which NOVACON was held during the same year as Eastercon 22?

a) 1 b) 3 c) 5 d) 7 e) 9

16. The following titles (a-e) comprise two pairs of related titles and one non-related title. Which is the unrelated one?

a) Make Room Make Room b) The Midwich Cuckoos c) Rollerball d) Soylent Green e) Village of the Damned

17. Which of the following titles (a-e) is the odd one out?

a) A Clockwork Orange b) The Day of the Triffids c) The Illustrated Man d) No Blade of Grass e) The War of the Worlds

Section B

18. In the final scene of the film *The Planet of the Apes*, what lies half-buried in the sand?

a) The Eiffel Tower b) A galleon c) A police box d) A spaceship e) The Statue of Liberty

19. In *Wizards Bane* (Cook) Wiz is Summoner because of his knowledge of

a) Computing b) History c) S&S d) Wargaming e) Weapons

20. Kelly Freas is best known as an

a) Artist b) Author c) Editor d) Fan e) Publisher

21. In *The Forbidden Planet* what is the robot's name?

a) Colossus b) C3PO c) Gort d) HAL e) Robby

22. In the "Myth" series by Asprin, Gleep is a

a) Demon b) Devil c) Dragon d) Dwarf e) None of these

23. *Citizen of the Galaxy* was written by

a) Heinlein b) Shaw c) Simak d) Verne e) Wells

24. Which star is nearest the Earth (Think about this one) (Acronym)

a) B b) PC c) R d) TC e) TS

25. Which city won the 1995 Worldcon bid?

a) Atlanta b) Brighton c) Glasgow d) Lille e) The Hague

26. Leonard Nimoy did not play Spock in the original *Star Trek* pilot

a) True b) False

27. In *E.T: The Extra-Terrestrial,* E.T.'s arrival coincides with

a) Christmas b) Easter c) Hallowe'en d) New Year

28. The "Dumarest" novels are written by

a) Camp b) Hoyle c) Hubbard d) Norton e) Tubb

29. How many Laws of Robotics (Asimov) are there

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

30. A traveller in a dead civil servant's uniform starts to reunite America. The title of the novel is

a) The Phoneman b) The Gasman c) The Policeman d) The Postman e) The Taxman

31. Which of the following (a-e) was not written by H G Wells?

a) The First Men in the Moon b) The Invisible Man c) The Mysterious Island d) The Time Machine e) The War of the Worlds

32. Dan Dare first appeared in

a) Eagle b) Falcon c) Lion d) Swift e) Tiger

33. The magazine *Analog* was previous called

a) Amazing b) Astounding c) F and SF d) Planet Stories e) Startling Stories

Section C

18. In what year is the film *Metropolis* set?

a) 1950 b) 2000 c) 2050 d) 2100 e) 3000

19. In the film *Forbidden Planet* what is the name of the vanished superrace?

a) The Bellus b) The Delos c) The Krel d) The Otocopul e) The Pygar

20. In what film did someone say "An intellectual carrot? The mind boggles". (Acronym)

a) DOTT b) IOTBS c) TB d) TQE e)TT

21. Of what do Androids dream (or do they)? (Acronym)

a) BR b) DD c) EF d) ES e) EG

22. "The Devil makes the Law" is better known as

a) Conjure Wife b) Dr Mirabilis c) Magic, Inc. d) That Hideous Strength e) The Traveller in Black

23. It is 1964, King Edward and Queen Wallis are to pay a state visit to Hitler and a body is found in a lake just outside Berlin. The title of this novel is

a) Deutschland b) Fatherland c) Final Solution d) Third Reich e) Uber Alles

24. In "The Lost Regiment" series (Forstchen) whch horde was first defeated by Colonel Keane?

a) Bantag b) Merki c) Tamak d) Tugar

25. In H G Wells' *The Time Machine,* of the six friends to whom the Time Traveller demonstrated his model machine, how many were

mentioned by name rather than profession or description

a) None b) 1 c) 2 d) 3 e) 4

26. In *The Kraken Wakes* by John Wyndham, how are the invaders finally killed?

a) Infra red b) Lasers c) Subsonics d) Ultrasonics d) Ultraviolet

27. What clue identified the killer in *Caves of Steel* (Asimov)?

a) Cotton thread b) Fingerprint c) Fragment of glass d) Piece of wood e) Sole print

28. Dr Acula was a pseudonym of

a) Ackerman b) Kornbluth c) Leinster d) Shaw e) Wyndham

29. What was Brian Aldiss' first published SF story?

a) A Book in Time b) Criminal Record c) Outside d) Psyclops e) T

30. *Aelita* is a film set on

a) Mercury b) Venus c) Earth d) Mars e) The Moon

31. Who wrote *Tarzan and the Valley of Gold*?

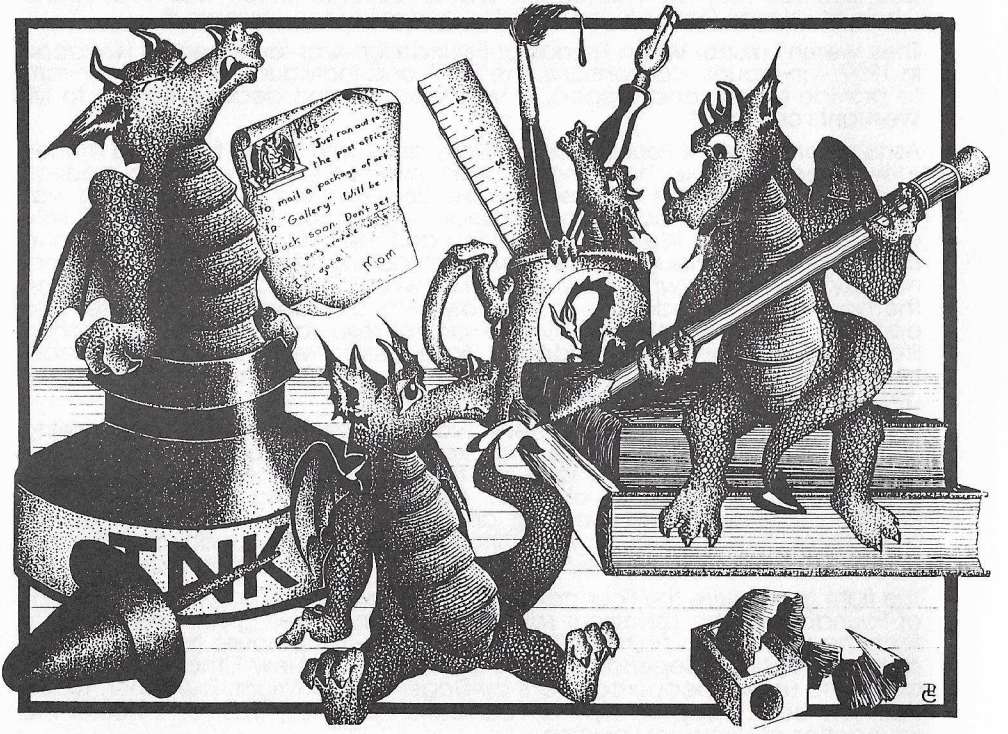
a) Asimov b) Burroughs c) Leiber d) Pohl e) Spinrad

32. Harry Harrison was originally a/an

a) Artist b) Bank clerk c) Postman d) Tailor e) Taxman

33. In the novel *War of the Worlds* (Wells) which of the following were <u>not</u> used by the Martians?

a) Black smoke b) Cylinder wheeled transport machines c) Heat Ray d) Multilegged crablike machines e) Three legged fighting machines



FRIENDS OF FOUNDATION

Paul Kincaid

In the Spring 1992 issue of the critical journal, *Extrapolation*, Gary Westfahl, a noted critic and frequent contributor to *Foundation*, wrote:

> "I frankly see no possibility that any organized group of Science Fiction fans would step forward to offer support for academic Science Fiction criticism".

There is a simple answer to that remark: Friends of Foundation.

The Science Fiction Foundation was established in 1971 at what was then the North East London Polytechnic (it has since been transmogrified into, first, the Polytechnic of East London, and most recently the University of East London). It was originally intended for the promotion of Science Fiction in an educational context, but with the growth of the library and the setting up of the journal, *Foundation*, it soon grew to be a major SF resource centre and one of the world's leading proponents of Science Fiction criticism. The educational side, meanwhile, slipped in importance and eventually disappeared.

Like every other establishment of further education, the Poly had to trim its financial sails during the 1980's, and it soon became obvious that the position of the Foundation was threatened. John Clute began to agitate, and a few years ago that agitation bore fruit. A group of fans got together and decided that the Foundation was a resource which was vital to the whole of Science Fiction in this country, and set out to preserve it.

They weren't alone. When Friends of Foundation was launched at Novacon in 1989, fan groups, conventions, the BSFA and individuals all came forward to provide money and support. A very elegant and decisive riposte to Mr Westfahl's comment.

As to what Friends of Foundation actually does with all the help and money they've received, they have mostly been involved in turning the Foundation library into the tool it is supposed to be. Believe it or not, cataloguing was virtually non-existent, acquisition of books was almost entirely random, little was done to ensure the correct shelving and the preservation of books and magazines, and though there were astonishing gaps in the collection, nobody really knew what they were. This wasn't due to any lack of will on the past of the Foundation, or the Poly who provided one and later two part-time staff; it was simply down to lack of resources. For most of its short life, therefore, Friends of Foundation have been involved in the necessary but unglamorous job of making up those resources. There's still a long way to go, but considerable progress has been made.

Behind the scenes, however, there was an even more vital task being undertaken. This was to ensure that when the time came, there was an organisation in existence to take on the running of the Foundation. Their success has just become obvious. At the beginning of the year, the Polytechnic finally pulled the plug on the Foundation. Or rather, the Poly announced that it could only continue to house the Foundation after the end of the financial year 1992/93 if the Foundation was self-financing.

The fight to preserve the Foundation immediately devolved upon the Friends of Foundation, who set about raising funds, and seeking solutions. And, in fact, they came up with two alternatives. One was to house the Foundation as a completely independent entity at a house in New Eltham which was offered to us at a peppercorn rent by Roger Fowler-Wright. The other, which has now been adopted by the Foundation Council, was to re-house the Foundation at Liverpool University.

How this will affect the fugure of the Foundation is unclear, largely because the details of the move are still being worked out by a working party under the auspices of Friends of Foundation. It is unlikely, however, that the relationship with the Foundation's new home will be on the same basis as its relationship with the Poly. I suspect that the Foundation will be more independent, and that Friends of Foundation will continue to have a major role to play in preserving that independence.

The Foundation is an organisation which everyone concerned with reading, writing, studying or criticising Science Fiction should support. And Friends of Foundation is proof that such support can be provided by fans.

For information about joining Friends of Foundation, contact Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 ORG.

THE GREAT NOVACON BOOK BALLOT

Bernie Evans

When I started collating the figures for this little effort, all sorts of ideas starting going through my head. What a lot I was going to write, pages and pages of statistical analysis, punctuated with witty repartee and incisive commentary.

Then I ran out of time, ran out of steam, and ran out of space as well, looking at the size of the list, because everyone's telling me that we *must* have the complete list in the programme book! So this somewhat pathetic effort is as far as it goes, for now, I may do a fanzine article sometime.

A word on the points system I used. Column 1 was obtained using a straightforward one book-one vote system, not taking the positions into account, Column 2 was obtained using what I'm happily referring to as a 3-2-1 system, top book on each list gets 3 points, second one gets 2 points, and third one gets 1 point. I didn't go on to the next stage, putting the third place votes for the bottom books somewhere else, partly because I ran out of time, partly because I don't know how to (!), but mostly because I didn't think it would make any difference to the end result anyway.

What fun you're all going to have picking me up on this, please do it in writing. I really do think it will make a good fanzine piece when I get round to it.

Whilst I was delighted at the response, I was less than delighted at the way some of you assumed either that the author didn't matter, or else that I would know every author of every book and be able to fill in the gaps. Some I could, many I couldn't!! The same applies to spelling errors and not knowing if a book started with "The" or "A", unless it was stated on the form.

Bit of a dead loss really, aren't I, no, no, NO, you're not supposed to agree with me when I say that.

Ok, 3rd column is the chart position obtained by 1 book-1 vote, 4th column is the chart position obtained by using 3-2-1 system.

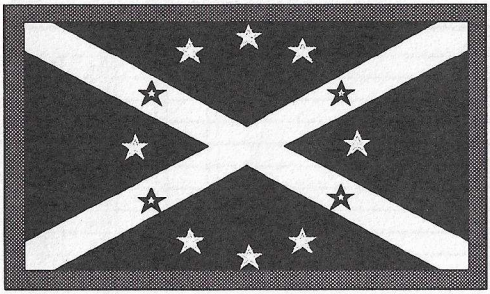
A sincere **thank you** to all who took the trouble to vote, a sincere **apology** to those who thought it could have been better planned, let us have precise details of *how* for future efforts, and a sincere *good night* from me!!

Alfred Bester	Tiger, Tiger (The Stars my Destination)	15	34	1	1
Ursula Le Guin	The Left Hand of Darkness	7	20	2=	2
Gene Wolfe	The Book of the New Sun	7	15	2=	3
Walter M Miller	A Canticle for Leibowitz	7	13	2=	4=
Frank Herbert	Dune	6	10	3	6=
John Brunner	Stand on Zanzibar	5	13	4=	4=
Dan Simmons	Hyperion Duo	5	11	4=	5=
Cordwainer Smith	Norstrilia	5	10	4=	6=
William Gibson	Neuromancer	5	9	4=	7=
J R R Tolkein	Lord of the Rings	4	11	5=	5=
Arthur C Clarke	Childhood's End	4	10	5=	6=
Eric Frank Russell	Next of Kin	4	10	5=	6=
Ursula Le Guin	The Dispossessed	4	9	5=	7=
Anne McCaffrey	The Ship Who Sang	4	7	5=	9=
Orson Scott Card	Speaker for the Dead	3	8	6=	8=
George R Stewart	Earth Abides	3	8	6=	8=
Larry Niven	Ringworld	3	7	6=	9=
Kurt Vonnegut Jnr	The Sirens of Titan	3	7	6=	9=
Tim Powers	The Anubis Gates	3	6	6=	10=
Iain M Banks	Consider Phlebas	3	5	6=	11=
Ursula Le Guin	Earthsea Trilogy	3	5	6=	11=
Anne McCaffrey	Dragonflight	3	5	6=	11=
Ken Grimwood	Replay	3	4	6=	12=
John Crowley	Little Big	2	6	7=	10=
Samuel R Delany	Dhalgren	2	6	7=	10=
Niven & Pournelle	The Mote in God's Eye	2	6	7=	10=
Terry Pratchett	The Colour of Magic	2	6	7=	10=
H G Wells	The War of the Worlds	2	6	7=	10=
Philip K Dick	Martian Timeslip	2	5	7=	11=
Robert A Heinlein	The Moon is a Harsh Mistress	2	5	7=	11=
Daniel Keyes	Flowers for Algernon	2	5	7=	11=
Ian McDonald	Desolation Road	2	5	7=	11=
Mervyn Peake	The Gormenghast Trilogy	2	5	7=	11=
Terry Pratchett	Moving Pictures	2	5	7=	11=
Iain M Banks	Use of Weapons	2	4	7=	12=
Iain Banks	Walking on Glass	2	4	7=	12=
Arthur C Clarke	The Sands of Mars	2	4	7=	12=
Hal Clement	Mission of Gravity	2	4	7=	12=
M John Harrison	The Centauri Device	2	4	7=	12=
Robert A Heinlein	Stranger in a Strange Land	2	4	7=	12=
Pratchett & Gaiman	Good Omens	2	4	7=	12=
Geoff Ryman	The Child Garden	2	4	7=	12=
Bob Shaw	Other Days Other Eyes	2	4	7=	12=
David Brin	The Postman	2	3	7=	13=
David Brin	Startide Rising	2	3	7=	13=
Philip K Dick	The Man in the High Castle	2	3	7=	13=
Patricia McKillip	Riddle Master Trilogy	2	3	7=	13=
Eric Frank Russell	Wasp	2	3	7=	13=
Theodore Sturgeon	More than Human	2	3	7=	13=
Mary Gentle	Rats and Gargoyles	2	2	7=	14=
Mary Gentle	Golden Witchbreed	2	2	7=	14=
Mark Helpin (?)	Winter's Tale	2	2	7=	14=
Eric Frank Russell	Men Martians and Machines	2	2	7=	14=
Brian Aldiss	Barefoot in the Head	1	3	8=	13=
Brian Aldiss	The Malacacia Tapestry	1	3	8=	13=
J G Ballard	The Atrocity Exhibition	1	3	8=	13=
Clive Barker	Imajica	1	3	8=	13=
Clive Barker	Weaveworld	1	3	8=	13=
Greg Bear	Forge of God	1	3	8=	13=
David Brin	The Uplift War	1	3	8=	13=
Fredric Brown	The Lights in the Sky Are Stars (Project Jupiter)	1	3	8=	13=

John Brunner	The Shockwave Rider	1	3	8=	13=
William Burroughs	The Naked Lunch	1	3	8=	13=
Suzy McKee Charnas	Walk to the End of the World	1	3	8=	13=
C J Cherryh	Chanur Quartet	1	3	8=	13=
C J Cherryh	The Faded Sun	1	3	8=	13=
Arthur C Clarke	The City and the Stars	1	3	8=	13=
Richard Cowper	The Twilight of Briar Eus	1	3	8=	13=
Charles De Lint	Moonheart	1	3	8=	13=
Samuel R Delany	Empire Star	1	3	8=	13=
Philip K Dick	Now Wait for Last Year	1	3	8=	13=
Philip K Dick	A Scanner Darkly	1	3	8=	13=
Feist & Wurts	Mistress of Empire	1	3	8=	13=
Raymond E Feist	Magician	1	3	8=	13=
Colin Greenland	Take Back Plenty	1	3	8=	13=
Joe Haldeman	Mindbridge	1	3	8=	13=
Charles L Harness	The Paradox Man	1	3	8=	13=
Harry Harrison	Bill The Galactic Hero	1	3	8=	13=
Robert A Heinlein	Citizen of the Galaxy	1	3	8=	13=
Zenna Henderson	The People	1	3	8=	13=
James P Hogan	Voyage from Yesteryear	1	3	8=	13=
Fritz Leiber	The Big Time	1	3	8=	13=
George Lucas	Star Wars	1	3	8=	13=
Richard Mattheson	Bid Time Return	1	3	8=	13=
Julian May	Intervention	1	3	8=	13=
Anne McCaffrey	Any Dragon Book	1	3	8=	13=
Michael Moorcock	The Condition of Muzak	1	3	8=	13=
Pat Murphy	The Falling Woman	1	3	8=	13=
Alexei Panshin	Rite of Passage	1	3	8=	13=
H Beam Piper	Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen	1	3	8=	13=
H Beam Piper	Space Viking	1	3	8=	13=
Terry Pratchett	Strata	1	3	8=	13=
Terry Pratchett	Truckers	1	3	8=	13=
Chris Priest	The Affirmation	1	3	8=	13=
Kim Stanley Robinson	Icehenge	1	3	8=	13=
Eric Frank Russell	Sentinels from Space	1	3	8=	13=
Robert Silverberg	Downward to the Earth	1	3	8=	13=
Clifford Simak	All Flesh is Grass	1	3	8=	13=
Olaf Stapledon	Star Maker	1	3	8=	13=
J R R Tolkein	The Hobbit	1	3	8=	13=
A E Van Vogt	Voyage of the Space Beagle	1	3	8=	13=
James White	The Aliens Amongst Us	1	3	8=	13=
James White	Star Surgeon	1	3	8=	13=
Jack Williamson	Darker Than You Think	1	3	8=	13=
Douglas Adams	Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy	1	2	8=	14=
Poul Anderson	The High Crusade	1	2	8=	14=
Isaac Asimov	The Caves of Steel/The Naked Sun	1	2	8=	14=
Margaret Attwood	The Handmaid's Tale	1	2	8=	14=
Iain M Banks	Player of Games	1	2	8=	14=
Steven Baxter	Raft	1	2	8=	14=
Peter S Beagle	The Folk of the Air	1	2	8=	14=
Greg Bear	Eon	1	2	8=	14=
Greg Bear	Queen of Angels	1	2	8=	14=
Lloyd Biggle, Jnr	The Still Small Voice of Trumpets	1	2	8=	14=
James Blish	Earthman Come Home	1	2	8=	14=
William R Burkett	Sleeping Planet	1	2	8=	14=
Jonathan Carroll	Land of Laughs	1	2	8=	14=
Angela Carter	The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman	1	2	8=	14=
Angela Carter	Heroes and Villains	1	2	8=	14=
C J Cherryh	Gate of Ivrel	1	2	8=	14=
C J Cherryh	Downbelow Station	1	2	8=	14=
Michael Coney	Hello Summer Goodbye	1	2	8=	14=

Storm Constantine	Hermetech	1	2	8=	14=
Lee Correy	Manna	1	2	8=	14=
John Crowley	Engine Summer	1	2	8=	14=
L Sprague De Camp	Lest Darkness Fall	1	2	8=	14=
Philip K Dick	Valis	1	2	8=	14=
Gordon R Dickson	Tactics of Mistake	1	2	8=	14=
Philip Jose Farmer	To Your Scattered Bodies Go	1	2	8=	14=
Raymond E Feist	Silverthorn	1	2	8=	14=
Alan Dean Foster	Cyberway	1	2	8=	14=
Alan Garner	Red Shift	1	2	8=	14=
Edmund Hamilton	The Star of Life	1	2	8=	14=
Charles L Harness	The Rose	1	2	8=	14=
Robert A Heinlein	Double Star	1	2	8=	14=
Robert Holdstock	Mythago Wood	1	2	8=	14=
Gwyneth Jones	Kairos	1	2	8=	14=
J Bradley Kellog	The Wave and the Flame	1	2	8=	14=
Garry Kilworth	Abandonati	1	2	8=	14=
Michael Kurland	The Unicorn Girl	1	2	8=	14=
R A Lafferty	Fourth Mansions	1	2	8=	14=
Stephen Lawhead	Taliesin	1	2	8=	14=
Ursula Le Guin	A Wizard of Earthsea	1	2	8=	14=
Stanislaw Lem	The Cyberiad	1	2	8=	14=
Brian Lumley	Necroscope	1	2	8=	14=
George R R Martin	Fevre Dream	1	2	8=	14=
Anne McCaffrey	Pegasus in Flight	1	2	8=	14=
Anne McCaffrey	All the Weyrs of Pern	1	2	8=	14=
Michael Moorcock	Dancers at the End of Time Trilogy	1	2	8=	14=
Grant Naylor	Better Than Life	1	2	8=	14=
Niven & Pournelle	Oath of Fealty	1	2	8=	14=
Larry Niven	Neutron Star	1	2	8=	14=
Mervyn Peake	Titus Groan	1	2	8=	14=
Chris Priest	A Dream of Wessex	1	2	8=	14=
D Quinn	Dreamer	1	2	8=	14=
Keith Roberts	Kaeti and Company	1	2	8=	14=
Eric Frank Russell	Best of...	1	2	8=	14=
Bob Shaw	The Ragged Astronauts	1	2	8=	14=
Dan Simmons	Phases of Gravity	1	2	8=	14=
John Sladek	Roderick	1	2	8=	14=
Cordwainer Smith	Quest of the Three Worlds	1	2	8=	14=
Cordwainer Smith	The Instrumentality of Man	1	2	8=	14=
Brian Stableford	The Werewolves of London	1	2	8=	14=
Olaf Stapledon	Last and First Men	1	2	8=	14=
Wilson Tucker	The Year of the Quiet Sun	1	2	8=	14=
A E Van Vogt	World of Null A	1	2	8=	14=
Jack Vance	Eyes of the Overworld	1	2	8=	14=
Jack Vance	Madouc (Lyonesse 3)	1	2	8=	14=
Kurt Vonnegut Jnr	Cat's Cradle	1	2	8=	14=
Freda Warrington	Rainbow Gate	1	2	8=	14=
Ian Watson	Miracle Visitors	1	2	8=	14=
John Wyndham	Chocky	1	2	8=	14=
John Wyndham	The Kraken Wakes	1	2	8=	14=
Timothy Zahn	Cobra	1	2	8=	14=
Brian Aldiss	Hothouse	1	1	8=	15=
Brian Aldiss	The Dark Light Years	1	1	8=	15=
Poul Anderson	Guardians of Time	1	1	8=	15=
Piers Anthony	On a Pale Horse	1	1	8=	15=
Isaac Asimov	Foundation Trilogy	1	1	8=	15=
Iain Banks	The Bridge	1	1	8=	15=
Barton & Capoblanco	Iris	1	1	8=	15=
Greg Benford	Timescape	1	1	8=	15=
Alfred Bester	The Demolished Man	1	1	8=	15=

David Brin	The Practice Effect	1	1	8=	15=
John Brunner	The Sheep Look Up	1	1	8=	15=
Pat Cadigan	Synners	1	1	8=	15=
Orson Scott Card	Ender's Game	1	1	8=	15=
Jack Chalker	Identity Matrix	1	1	8=	15=
C J Cherryh	Cyteen	1	1	8=	15=
Richard Cowper	Clone	1	1	8=	15=
John Crowley	The Deep	1	1	8=	15=
Samuel R Delany	Nova	1	1	8=	15=
Philip K Dick	Our Friends from Frolix 8	1	1	8=	15=
Gordon R Dickson	Dorsai	1	1	8=	15=
Suzanne Elgin	Native Tongue	1	1	8=	15=
Jack Finney	Time and Again	1	1	8=	15=
Joe Haldeman	The Forever War	1	1	8=	15=
Barbara Hambly	Darwarth Trilogy	1	1	8=	15=
Robert A Heinlein	The Door into Summer	1	1	8=	15=
Guy Gavriel Kay	Tigana	1	1	8=	15=
Lackey & Guon (?)	Knights of Ghosts and Shadows	1	1	8=	15=
Keith Laumer	Galactic Odyssey	1	1	8=	15=
Tanith Lee	The Silver Metal Lover	1	1	8=	15=
Norman Mailer	Fire on the Moon	1	1	8=	15=
Anne McCaffrey	Dragonsong	1	1	8=	15=
Anne McCaffrey	Dragonsinger: Harper of Pern	1	1	8=	15=
Anne McCaffrey	Damia	1	1	8=	15=
Robert McCammon	Swan Song	1	1	8=	15=
Jack McDevitt	A Talent for War	1	1	8=	15=
Patricia McKillip	Fools Run	1	1	8=	15=
Michael Moorcock	End of All Songs	1	1	8=	15=
Peter Morwood	The Horse Lord	1	1	8=	15=
Larry Niven	Protector	1	1	8=	15=
Marge Piercy	Woman on the Edge of Time	1	1	8=	15=
H Beam Piper	Little Fuzzy	1	1	8=	15=
Frederik Pohl	Gateway	1	1	8=	15=
Terry Pratchett	Guards Guards	1	1	8=	15=
Terry Pratchett	Light Fantastic	1	1	8=	15=
Chris Priest	Inverted World	1	1	8=	15=
Keith Roberts	The Furies	1	1	8=	15=
Keith Roberts	Pavane	1	1	8=	15=
Kim Stanley Robinson	Escape from Kathmandu	1	1	8=	15=
Spider Robinson	Night of Power	1	1	8=	15=
Joanna Russ	The Female Man	1	1	8=	15=
Bob Shaw	Night Walk	1	1	8=	15=
Robert Silverberg	Tower of Glass	1	1	8=	15=
Cordwainer Smith	Spacelords	1	1	8=	15=
Thomas Smith	Skin and Bone	1	1	8=	15=
Olaf Stapledon	Sirius	1	1	8=	15=
Gerald Suster	Striker	1	1	8=	15=
J R R Tolkein	The Silmarillion	1	1	8=	15=
Lisa Tuttle	Windhaven	1	1	8=	15=
Various	Dispatches from the Frontiers of the Female Mind	1	1	8=	15=
John Varley	The Ophiuchi Hotline	1	1	8=	15=
Howard Waldrop	Strange Things in Close Up	1	1	8=	15=
James White	The Silent Stars Go By	1	1	8=	15=
James White	Code Blue Emergency	1	1	8=	15=
John Wyndham	The Day of the Triffids	1	1	8=	15=



We Won!

Guest of Honor
Samuel R Delany

INTERSECTION

Guest of Honour
Gerry Anderson

"The Scottish WorldCon"

Intersection will be the 1995 Worldcon. It will be held at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and the adjacent Moat House International Hotel, over the weekend of 24-28 August 1995.

Membership Rates for Glasgow in '95

These rates are valid until 31 Dec 1992. Glasgow pre-support and friend benefits will expire on 30 April 1993: after that date, presupporters will become non-members and Friends will become supporters.

Voted?	PreSupported?	beFriended?	Status	to Support	to Attend
no	no	no	None	£15	£40
		yes	Friend	*	£15
	yes	no	PreSupp	£10	£35
		yes	Friend	*	£10
yes	no	no	Support	£0	£25
		yes	Attend	£0	£0
	yes	no	Support	£0	£20
		yes	Attend	£0	£0
Bought Attending when voted			Attend	£0	£0

Memberships for children born after 24 August 1988 will be £5
Memberships for children born after 24 August 1980 will be £15

US Address: Theresa Renner, Box 15430 Washington DC 20003
UK Address: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH

1992: THE YEAR IN SF

Kev McVeigh

To look at Science Fiction in 1992 in terms of trends and breakdowns into sub-genres is not a simple task. There are areas of great forward momentum carrying deep into 1993 and 1994, but there has been so much variety again this year that a selection of highlights and disappointments might be equally as valid.

1992 has been a year of great anticipation. Long awaited novels and exciting newcomers have generated a sense of optimism which may not be entirely misplaced: some things do look very good. At the same time, events in the real world have reached a series of climaxes which relate to events portrayed in SF. One doesn't look for accurate prophecy, but thorough extrapolation and perceptive interpretation may contribute to our understanding of our times. SF is, after all, predominantly about the present and recent past.

One such event was the recent launch of the Mars Observer mission, and for once NASA got things right: the mission launched in the week of publication of Kim Stanley Robinson's epic *Red Mars*. This 500-page space opera on the Martian landscape had been awaited eagerly as the first volume of a new triptych by Robinson. It doesn't disappoint, being a strong blend of Soap Opera Social Dynamics within artificial environments, hard politics and hard science, and incorporating the rare sense of wonder within its characters as much as in its readers. Robinson himself is very scathing about NASA in an interview for *Vector*, the critical and review magazine of the British Science Fiction Association, but another Mars novel has the Agency sold off to Disney! Terry Bisson finally gets a UK edition for the excellent *Voyage to the Red Planet*. As its title suggests, there is much pastiche of Golden Age (sic) SF here, but this accompanies a great deal of satire and the whole is very defiantly up-to-date and post-modern. Passages remind me of Lewis Shiner's *Frontera*, and there is an unabashed Sentinel allusion with a sub-text typical of Bisson. Few serious novels are this much fun. Mars is in fashion right now, and there are apparently Mars novels due from Allen Steele, Ben Bova and others. They'll need to be a long way better than their previous novels to be as good as *Red Mars* or *Voyage to the Red Planet*.

If *Red Mars* is a (self-) limited Space Opera, what of the grand scale? Vernor Vinge, an author whose lack of huge success must only be down to his relatively low output, launches the Millennium imprint in huge style. Very definitely wide-screen SF. Anne McCaffrey, meanwhile, follows up *The Rowan* with more predictably banal slush, *Damia*. And Keith Brooke, one of the less feted of the *Interzone* generation, follows up *Expatria* with *Expatria Incorporated*. This is Brooke's third novel, and comes with a jacket reminiscent of those old Granada *Lensman* books. Some people like it.

Elsewhere, the *Interzone* generation are receiving higher praise: last year Paul McAuley and Stephen Baxter both reached the Arthur C Clarke Award shortlist, Eric Brown published an acclaimed debut collection, and Kim Newman got everywhere. This year has seen more from Newman, and a first novel from Brown. *Meridian Days* has some similarities with Brown's earlier story "The Death of Cassandra Quebec". It is, unfortunately, a disaster. A sequence of ill-assorted cliches pulled loosely together by insipid plotting and variable prose. Basically, it looks like Eric has been rushed into this novel to follow up the success of *The Time Lapsed Man*, and he isn't ready yet. This is shown up further by a whole slew of first novels recently published, some by authors known through *Interzone* and other story markets, some entirely new names. Simon Ings has been highly regarded on the basis of a very few stories, and his novel *Hothead* was almost as eagerly sought as Brown's. Ings

has some of the indulgences of youth, but this is countered by the vigour of his writing. Plot-wise, *Hothead* explores previously uncharted backstreets of cyberpunk land in a taut and restrained style. And if Steampunk followed Cyberpunk, then there is much of the former in John Whitbourne's *A Dangerous Energy* (the winner of the BBC Bookshelf/Gollancz first fantasy novel competition).

For many readers, the most exciting newcomer this year has been Sue Thomas, who had *Correspondence* published by The Women's Press. Virtual Reality is a big thing at the moment, and Thomas gets inside it and hence gets it inside the reader without many obvious tricks, and then tells a completely unexpected love story. Of sorts. Other first timers include an Australian Space Fantasy *And Disregards the Rest* by Paul Voermans and bizarre comic crossovers from Mark Jacobson (*Gojiro* - a giant monster movie tale of the blackest kind) and John Hart (*Jizz* - compared to Tom Sharpe, but don't let that put you off).

These newcomers may be exploiting market niches created by a dearth of new work from major names this year. McCaffrey, Donaldson (book 3 of the *Gap* series), Silverberg... and then it's the newer names Robinson, Vinge, Simmons (in horror mode, twice, and a story collection too!) and C J Cherryh with a new Merchanter novel. That is almost all I've seen from really big names this year.

In Britain, it is slightly different, critically-lauded, if not so big selling names, have produced special books this year. It is difficult to decide whether Geoff Ryman's *Was...* or M John Harrison's *The Course of the Heart* are fantasy novels or not, but both show the authors at their very best. Both are deeply disturbing texts, in very different ways, and both amply repay re-reading. It seems that contemporary British authors are all moving into new areas individually, separately and yet simultaneously, and some of the results are fascinating. Mary Gentle's hilarious *Grunts* which tells old stories from the Orc Marines' viewpoints; Martin Millar's *The Good Fairies of New York*, which maintains the vibrant street suss of his Brixton novels in New York and becomes a more outright fantasy than before. It also has the coolest dead star of them all - the one who died twice, Johnny Thunders.

One definite success for British SF has been Ian McDonald, who finally moves to a publisher who is prepared to bring his books out on time instead of up to fourteen months after the US editions. The time-lag means that this year has seen two UK books from McDonald: the Irish fantasy trilogy of novellas, *King of Morning, Queen of Day* is unlike anything that preceded it, ripe with myth and allusion, and worth further study; the newer novel, *Hearts, Hands & Voices* is different again - a weird fantasy landscape with sentient trees and talking (dead) heads like a cross between Shirley's *A Splendid Chaos* and Ryman's *Unconquered Country*, as written by Ian McDonald (hmmmm).

Straight(er) Fantasy has been well-served too, as Jenny Jones completes her *Flight Over Fire* trilogy without unnecessary saccharine, or too much tying-in of loose ends and Sheri Tepper's *Beauty* re-tells an old story in a most un-Disneylike manner.

For shorter fiction, the main magazines plog on, workmanlike, punctuated by flares of greater things. The small press feel the economic winter more obviously, and most of the magazines have been quiet of late. Have no doubt, most will return. There have been the anthologies to fill some of the gap: *Villians!* and *New Worlds* 2. And the McAuley & Newman tribute to the 7-inch single, *In Dreams*. This latter frequently strayed from one or all of its alleged remits (the 7" single, SF, Fantasy & Horror), but still managed to be good throughout, with few indulgences. The Woodstock generation was still obvious, though c-punk sampling crept in, but after 400-plus pages the reader comes to "Snodgrass" Ian R MacLeod doing Lennon like nobody else dared. This one alone is worth the price of admission, as are the stories by

Ian McDonald, Lisa Tuttle and Alastair Reynolds, and two pieces of, effectively, rock journalism by F Paul Wilson and Lewis Shiner. Oddly, no Waldrop, no McAuley or Newman, no DiFilippo or Sterling. No Martin Millar either, and definitely no Johnny Thunders. Never mind.

For what it's worth, and bearing in mind that as I write this article, 1992 is still less than three quarters complete, I think it has been a good year. I haven't mentioned long-overdue UK editions of Suzy McKee Charnas' *The Vampire Tapestry* or Samuel R Delany's *Triton* and *Dhalgren* (this one, remarkably, a UK first). Nor many of the books I have still to read such as Lisa Tuttle's *Lost Futures*, which comes highly praised, or those new American books by Elizabeth Hand, Richard Grant, Judith Moffett, Janet Kagan. Nor those writers from the mainstream (sic) who published SF this year: P D James, Simon Louvish, Marge Piercy, Hugo McEwan, Alasdair Gray...

It has also been a sad year. Isaac Asimov, Angela Carter, Fritz Leiber all died during 1992. Each, in their distinctive manner, created works of beauty, passion and power. Each had their failures too, but we can remember instead *Foundation, Nights At The Circus,* the Fafhrd and Grey Mouser series. We may grow weary and critical, but such things are rare enough that we won't forget them.

A WORLDCON TOO FAR

Ian Sorensen

In 1995 the World Science Fiction Convention will be held in Glasgow. For reasons that hurt the brain to explore, the con is being called **Intersection**. This will be the first time the event will have been held in Britain anywhere north of Watford, posing the question: does that matter? Will there be a perception of Glasgow as being remote from the centres of fannish population and hence difficult and expensive to attend? Or will the drawing power of the star-studded participants' list win the day? Let's see what we can learn from the past about what makes people attend or stay away from conventions.

Since the 1979 Worldcon in Brighton there has been a steady rise in both the number of conventions and the numbers attending conventions in Britain. Before '79 there were only 2 annual cons (Eastercon and Novacon), the official Star Trek con, plus a handful of occasional local events drawing a hundred or so members. Now there is a convention every month (SF, horror, Trek, Anime, gaming, comics, Dangermouse) whose membership could be expected to be interested in a Worldcon. Add to that the repeating conventions (Unicon, the ASMs, Armadacon, Mexicon) and you have a congoing public whose numbers in any given year (even allowing for overlaps) must be in excess of 3000. But where do they live and how far do they travel?

The centre of gravity of the British population is somewhere south of Birmingham. The centre of gravity of the *convention going* population is, I believe, further north (even allowing for southern beer guts). My reasons for suspecting this are twofold: impressions gained from working with membership lists for conventions over many years and the dearth of conventions in the Home Counties. Certainly, the high cost of function space around London is a problem, but many successful cons have been held at the Shepperton Moat hotel and I can't believe that it is the only one in the south east that can provide affordable accommodation. So, although there may actually be a greater number of fans living around London than anywhere else, the type of fannish activity that takes place seems to be different from the rest of the country: more local meetings, fewer conventions. Yet it would be the ideal area in which to hold a convention as

there is a huge potential membership within easy travelling distance and there is the densest concentration of transport infrastructure in the country to get them there. This, paradoxically, is the key to the problem: where travel is easy there is a tendency not to want to stay overnight - so a one day event might attract many more people than a weekend affair. (Speaking of weekend affairs.... I'm sure Brighton was used for two Worldcons and a Eurocon precisely because it was perceived by Londoners as a location that, although within commuting distance, was associated with overnight stays - though not necessarily for conventions!) A convention can't be successful when most of the attendees vanish for the last train at 11pm.

Those living in the more geographically discrete fannish centres of the North (Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool etc.) expect to have to travel further and stay overnight when they attend an event. This means that, from a psychological viewpoint, they are more likely to go to a con than their southern counterparts. The relative decline in prosperity of the South during the current recession can only increase the likelihood of southern fans choosing to stay at home and have a party rather than go to Liverpool or Glasgow for a convention. For others, say the Plymouth fans, travelling *anywhere* is an immense hassle and a local convention is the only viable option. The original objection to the first Jersey con was that only rich southern fans could afford to get to the Channel Islands, but in the event, the rich southern fans stayed away simply because they couldn't face the awkward journey - Edinburgh would have been more straightforward to get to. In the event, the attendees were the usual Eastercon mix. As for the original plan to bid for the Worldcon to be held in St Helier, well, it was as barmy as the plot hatched in the eighties to move Novacon to Glasgow because the BSFG members for whom it was run never bothered to attend. Just because the facilities are available for a convention, it doesn't mean that you should run one. Conventions need to be in demand before they can take place.

Why go to a convention at all? If your main reason for going is to meet other fans then a pub meeting or party is perfectly OK. And if it's a chance to meet the writers that you seek then there are more signing sessions and book events in London than anywhere else. In fact, when 1995 rolls round I doubt if there will be a single author appearing on the Worldcon programme who doesn't also put in an appearance at some London publishing event. Even outside London there are many people, like the BSFG members, who prefer to meet guests and each other for an evening rather than a weekend: twelve monthly meetings probably provide more socialising and programme time than most people manage at a convention.

Yet, there is obviously a big demand for conventions. What do they provide that is unique?

The first advantage of cons is their size: a local group might have a few Anime nuts but a convention allows scores of them to get together and swap information, see new films and feel part of something special instead of being a minority voice in a larger group. And the principle carries over to all types of conventions - specialist and general, literary and media - the act of coming together at a convention gives each person there a feeling of being part of a significant culture. At work they are "Chris the Trekkie" or "Tony the UFO spotter", but at a convention they are simply Chris and Tony, much to their relief. It's a bit like coming *into* the closet. Cons provide something even for the fans who <u>don't</u> want to meet other fans - at a convention they can become anonymous faces in the crowd and just get on with enjoying the SF.

Another advantage that the convention has over a pub meeting is, of course, a much larger budget. By carefully balancing the cost of hiring function space against prospective membership even a small (100 person) convention can spend over £1000 on guests and programme items.

(Membership £15, typical function space in a smallish hotel £100 per day after negotiating it down from the £500 they expect weddings to pay, PRs and postage £150, hire of PA and video player £100 - and fifty quid left for emergencies.) This kind of budget could work even in the deep south, if anyone really tried to do it. The bigger a convention is, the greater the potential for spending big money, but the risks involved in hiring a large venue are considerable. This is why most convention committees plan for a small con. In Glasgow a ten year run of annual conventions built up from 150 members to 800 simply because the organisers had the confidence to expect 2-300 new members coming through the door each year, attracted by a programme of films, videos and big name authors. That type of programme includes little of interest to people who have been to a few conventions, so the Glasgow cons always lacked much of a "fannish" presence: it's a long way to travel from Leeds or London to Scotland to see a few films, so, unless the guest was a great attraction or people wanted to visit friends, the convention had to rely on the local SF aficionados. To ensure the punter off the street would continue to come in, the programme was pitched to the "lowest common denominator", making the con even less attractive to the itinerant congoer. They did, however, make lots of money which could be used to set up the next one. I can see no reason why this couldn't be done in London, other than the reluctance of the local fans to put that much effort into an event that wouldn't appeal to their peers.

Of course, you don't need to meet other fans at all. The BSFA has run, more or less successfully for decades simply giving SF readers what they want most: more information about SF than is available from the general media. It would be interesting to see how their members are spread throughout the country: does a postal involvement appeal more to people in isolated, possibly rural, areas without access to specialist shops, or do city dwellers also want what the BSFA offers? Perhaps the '95 Worldcon should be a postal event, with talks and speeches available for a stamped addressed envelope or two.....

So, will thousands turn up for a Glasgow Worldcon? Yes, but the number coming from south of Birmingham will be less than simple demographics would predict. If, as the name **Intersection** implies, the committee are genuinely looking to attract fans of all SF related genres (not just the "straight SF" or typical Eastercon members) then their presence will have two effects: firstly, any large number of extra (non-"straight SF") memberships will make the committee feel that they don't have to push so hard to get the normal Eastercon-attending fans and, secondly, the presence of such fans will discourage the older, reactionary fans from attending. (You know the sort: they're the ones who would ban Hitch Hiker fans from the 'Ton and make watching Dr Who a capital offence.)

Other factors that might influence the geographical mix include the possibility of an early General Election leading to an independent Scotland which imposes border controls to prevent mass migration from the drought stricken south into the verdant land of Caledonia. Should any of these wretched refugees make it as far as Glasgow they might have to be held in detention centres, like the big hut beside the Clyde that locals call the S.E.C. but the '95 Worldcon calls home.

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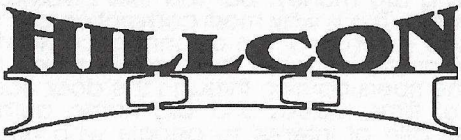

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IS THERE A FANZINE RENAISSANCE?

Joseph Nicholas

Is there a fanzine renaissance? Echo answers: not sure - although a year ago it might have answered no, and two years ago the answer might even have been: fanzine? What fanzine?

Some recent history, for those interested enough to pursue this question. Fanzine fandom tended to dominate the fandom of the seventies, in part because it was the only cohesive ideological bloc then extant, and in part by default - because there was little else for active fans to do. *Star Trek*, filking, costuming; such fandoms existed, but led a rather subterranean existence. If you wanted to do anything, or to be anyone, of any real note you had to be a fanzine fan; and fanzine fans perforce ran most of the conventions.

This changed in the early eighties. The growth in the size of fandom, as measured by attendances at conventions and the growth in the number of conventions themselves, led to the emergence of a separate convention-running fandom and, in tandem, the firm establishment of the other fandoms that had led such a marginal existence during the seventies. Fanzine fandom lost its dominance, and became just one among many competing activities. In some quarters (but not mine), this is referred to as the "balkanisation" of fandom, which arrogantly implies that the domination of other fandoms by fanzine fandom is the desirable and indeed natural state of affairs. No - but its dethronement naturally sparked a period of self-questioning amongst fanzine fans themselves.

Independently of this, fanzine fandom underwent an ideological collapse of its own. It had been sustained throughout the seventies by a specific hegomonic project: to construct an indigenous British fanzine fandom which owed nothing to others. But a focus on the construction of such an entity avoided addressing the question of what it was actually for, and what fanzine fans could do with it - and when no answer could be located, dissolution was inevitable. Many leading lights of the seventies either fell silent or gafiated (having, in any case, reached an age when real-world concerns like careers, mortgages and children were more important), while others retreated into apas. Fanzines continued to be published, but sporadically, and demonstrated no awareness that they were part of any fanzine community. There were few if any new recruits: new fans were inevitably attracted to the alternative models of endeavour offered by convention-running, filking, costuming, et al. (Fanzines' obsession with fan history in the early eighties appeared little other than an attempt to uncover where fanzine fandom had erred, and was not at all attractive; and the argument advanced by some that potential recruits were repelled by the KTF reviews in the fanzines they picked up at conventions can be dismissed immediately since no such reviews were being written by anyone).

I've argued in recent years that the continual decline in fanzine fandom is inevitable unless it consciously remakes itself; in particular, recognises that it is part of the larger world of amateur publishing, and makes explicit contact with it to learn from its different approaches and attempt to appropriate some of its vitality. Responses to this have varied from claims that "little magazines" provide no relevant models for fanzines to imitate - falsely pretending that all amateur publications other than fanzines are "little magazines" - to assertions that there is no reason why people shouldn't publish fanzines rather than spend their money on something else - which is undeniably true, but fails to explain why they don't.

Nevertheless - and although there are no signs that fanzines are doing anything new - over the past year there may have been a slight rise in the

number of fanzines published. One reason for this may be the continuing economic recession, and in particular the fact that in a recession people are more cautious about major spending commitments - such as the major spending commitments that conventions represent. Instead, goes one argument, people are publishing fanzines. But while convention memberships have fallen, and some smaller conventions have either been cancelled or made losses, conventions in general have not (as yet) been noticeably affected by the recession, and in any case there's no causative connection between convention-going and fanzine-publishing. Those who can no longer afford conventions won't necessarily wish to publish fanzines instead, and those who do publish would probably have done so anyway. (While we can't afford to go to conventions because we've spent the money on foreign travel).

Another reason for the increase in the number of fanzines might be (antiquated though the concept sounds) that these things run in cycles, and there's a general feeling that it's time for people to start publishing again. But one has to be cautious: people publish fanzines for a variety of reasons, which may have nothing to do with what other fans are doing, nor any reference to the contents of other fanzines. (Our own *FTT* pays little, if any, attention to other fanzines, or even to fandom in general). So it is with the present crop of fanzines: there is much talk in some of them about a fanzine renaissance, but little evidence of the sense of community - and in particular the sense of cohesion that develops when ideas start to feed off each other - necessary for a genuine renaissance to take root. This is not to say that one might not occur; but the manner in which, over the past five to seven years, every slightest sign of increased fanzine activity has been hailed as yet another renaissance is not encouraging.

Critics of this thesis will probably counter with a list of all the fanzines that have appeared during the past twelve months. But this is the wrong number: what counts is not the number of titles, but their frequency of publication, which is a much more important indicator of life and health. Thus, while several fanzines have been published during the past twelve months, in most cases they appeared no more than twice a year.

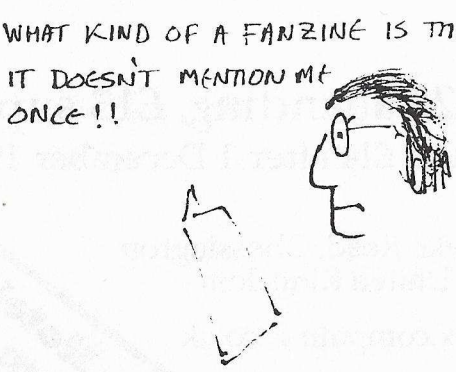
Here, just to keep my critics happy, is a list of those fanzines which appeared at least twice this year. Our own *FTT*, Nigel Richardson's *Slubberdegullion*, Michael Ashley's *Saliromania*, Simon Ounsley's *The Darling Buds from the Black Lagoon*, Martin Gittins's *Everybody is Exploding*, Ian Sorensen's *Bob*, Rhodri James's *The Light Stuff*, Tommy Ferguson's *Tash*, Ken Cheslin's *A Child's Garden of Olaf* (retitled *The Olaf Alternative*), David Langford's *Ansible* and Martin Tudor and Steve Green's *Critical Wave*.

Critical Wave and *Ansible* are newszines, the former of which approaches its material in a very much more formal manner than the latter, the tone of which is more gossipy and irreverent. The former is available on subscription, and is intended to appear roughly bi-monthly; the latter appears monthly, is distributed according to editorial whim, and is reprinted as a column in *Interzone*. *A Child's Garden of Olaf/The Olaf Alternative* is visually a mess and the contents - with a high proportion of faan fiction and long-winded anecdotes - remind one (perhaps deliberately) of what a fifties fanzine might have felt like. *The Light Stuff, Tash, Bob* and *Everybody Is Exploding* are all personal journals, but of very different kinds - *The Light Stuff* is frothy and forgettable, *Tash* rather overwritten, *Everybody Is Exploding* notable mostly for architectural jokes, *Bob* rich and amusing. *The Darling Buds From the Black Lagoon* is also a personal journal, this time from someone who's been absent for many years as a consequence of myalgic encephalomyelitis and is now writing about his recovery from it by what might charitably be described as non-orthodox medical means (spiritual healing and other New Age wank). *Saliromania* and *Slubberdegullion* are two personal journals which should perhaps be considered together because both tend to

specialise in the awfulness of ordinary life - and, for that matter, the awfulness of much of fandom (fans' unhealthy appearance, unappealing personalities, terrible tastes in music and clothes). Ashley writes a great deal (and with what he wants us to regard as irony) on the alcohol he needs to get through the day, and how pointless fandom seems when compared to the outside world; and Richardson writes about his crappy jobs and the lack of cute lycra-microskirted babes in fandom (and how, when he encounters them outside it, they're already attached to someone else). Of the two, Richardson is the better writer but the repeated moaning about the lack of "cute babes", while amusing the first time, is now rather wearisome and unattractive. Our own *FTT* (just to complete the list) is concerned with politics, history and travel.

I have never seen a coy of John Owen's *Shipyard Blues*, so can't comment on it, although I believe it has also appeared twice during the past twelve months. But every other title I can think of has appeared only once - and in some cases, such as Avedon Carol's, Rob Hansen's and John Harvey's *Pulp*, only just (it last appeared at last year's Novacon). D West has published only one issue of *Daisnaid*; but it has always been a rather occasional publication anyway. Alan Dorey published a *Gross Encounters* after a gap of two years, with a promise (of the kind we've heard many times before) that he'd be publishing more frequently in future. Steve Green has published one issue of *Gaijun*, and announced that he intends to produce at least three more. And there have doubtless been several others which I either haven't seen, can't remember, or have forgotten.It should go without saying that a genuine renaissance would see a genuine upsurge in activity, but if this is restricted to publishing no more than twice a year, then the life and health claimed for fanzine fandom by some of its more enthusiastic proponents would seem to be rather lacking. And where is the sense of community, the sense of shared endeavour, that a resurgence must demonstrate if it is to take root, and to flourish? My conclusion is as before: that, whatever people may claim, fanzines are continuing their slow decline, and that, sooner or later, they will die out completely.

Numerous people at this convention will disagree with this argument. Numerous people (the same ones) will argue that I'm a gloomy old curmudgeon who's out of touch with contemporary fanzine fandom (it's true that I don't occupy the same position, closer to the centre, that I did in my fannish youth) and that I will soon be one with the dinosaurs and the Marxist-Leninists (except that my politics are more Gramscian - take careful note of that, critics!). Numerous people (a full list can be supplied on receipt of an appropriately-sized SAE) will perhaps be baying for the blood of the traitor as they solicit your vote for this year's Nova Awards. Just give the buggers the hard eye, and ask them one simple question: *why*?



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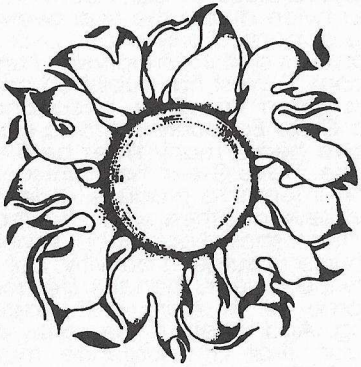

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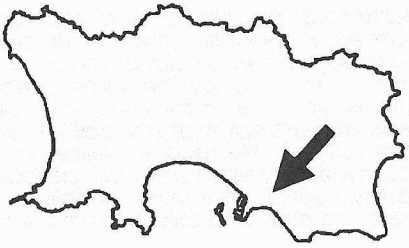

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THE NOVA AWARDS

In 1973 the late Gillon Field created the Nova as the Birmingham Science Fiction Group's annual fanzine award. At first, one particular fanzine was selected by a committee of active fans, but since 1977 the Nova has been awarded by vote and in 1981 the vote was extended to encompass the best fanzine, fan writer and fan artist of the year. In 1986, fanzines that had only appeared once in the preceding year also became eligible, which permitted "one-off"s to be eligible.

A "fanzine" is an amateur magazine, preferably concerned with SF/F, which is sent on request, in trade and, if necessary, on editorial whim. It must have appeared at least once in the year between 1 October 1991 and 30 September 1992 and it is expected that Novacon voters will be "informed" in that they will have received at least six different fanzines in the preceding year (this means six different publications, not different issues of the same fanzine, and it doesn't mean official organs of a club, convention or society either).

Year	Winner	Fanzine
1973	Peter Weston	*Speculation*
1974	Lisa Conesa	*Zimri*
1975	Rob Jackson	*Maya*
1976	Rob Jackson	*Maya*
1977	Dave Langford	*Twll-Ddu*
1978	Alan Dorey	*Gross Encounters*
1979	Simone Walsh	*Seamonsters*
1980	Dave Bridges	*One-off*

Year	Best Fanzine	Best Fan Writer	Best Fan Artist
1981	Malcolm Edwards *Taffen*	Chris Atkinson	Pete Lyons
1982	Rob Hansen *Epsilon*	Chris Atkinson	Rob Hansen
1983	Dave Bridges *A Cool Head*	Dave Bridges	Margaret Welbank
1984	Dave Wood *Xyster*	Anne Hamill Warren	D West
1985	John Jarrold *Prevert*	Abi Frost	Ros Calverley
1986	Owen Whiteoak *Pink Fluffy Bedsocks*	Owen Whiteoak	Arthur "Atom" Thompson
1987	Hazel Ashworth *Lip*	D West	D West
1988	Hazel Ashworth *Lip*	Michael Ashley	D West
1989	Jan Orys *VSOP*	Simon Polley	Dave Mooring
1990	Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas *FIT*	Dave Langford	Dave Mooring
1991	Michael Ashley *Saliromania*	Michael Ashley	D West

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THE HISTORY OF NOVACON

Novacon	Venue	Guest of Honour	Chair	Attendees (Committee)
1	Imperial Centre	James White	Vernon Brown	144
	(Ray Bradbury, Alan Denham, Alan Donnelly, Pauline Dungate)			
2	Imperial Centre	Doreen Rogers	Vernon Brown	144
	(Stan Eling, Jeffrey Hacker, Richard Newnham, Meg Palmer, Hazel Reynolds)			
3	Imperial Centre	Ken Bulmer	Hazel Reynolds	146
	(Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Meg Palmer, Geoff Winterman)			
4	Imperial Centre	Ken Slater	Dr Jack Cohen	211
	(Pauline Dungate, Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Robert Hoffman, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton, Hazel Reynolds)			
5	Royal Angus	Dan Morgan	Rog Peyton	272
	(Ray Bradbury, Pauline Dungate, Robert Hoffman, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton)			
6	Royal Angus	Dave Kyle	Stan Eling	317
	(Helen Eling, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton)			
7	Royal Angus	John Brunner	Stan Eling	278
	(Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, Dave Langford)			
8	Holiday Inn	Anne McCaffrey	Laurence Miller	309
	(Dave Holmes, Kathy Holmes, Chris Walton, Jackie Wright)			
9	Royal Angus	Christopher Priest	Rog Peyton	290
	(Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Chris Morgan, Pauline Morgan, Paul Olroyd)			
10	Royal Angus	Brian W Aldiss	Rog Peyton	495
	(Joseph Nicholas, Keith Oborn, Krystyna Oborn, Paul Oldroyd, Chris Walton)			
11	Royal Angus	Bob Shaw	Paul Oldroyd	362
	(Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Joseph Nicholas, Phil Probert)			
12	Royal Angus	Harry Harrison	Rog Peyton	373
	(Chris Baker, Dave Hardy, Eunice Pearson, Phil Probert)			
13	Royal Angus	Lisa Tuttle	Phil Probert	339
	(Chris Donaldson, Steve Green, Dave Haden, Jan Huxley, Paul Oldroyd, Eunice Pearson, Paul Vincent, John Wilkes)			
14	Grand	Rob Holdstock	Steve Green	333
	(Kevin Clarke, Ann Green, Dave Heden, Eunice Pearson, Phil Probert, Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent)			
15	De Vere Coventry	James White Dave Langford	Phil Probert	340
	(Tony Berry, Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Graham Poole, Martin Tudor)			
16	De Vere Coventry	E C Tubb Chris Evans	Tony Berry	257
	(Nick Mills, Darroll Pardoe, Rosemary Pardoe, Graham Poole, Maureen Porter)			
17	Royal Angus	Iain Banks	Bernie Evans	352
	(Mick Evans, Dave Hardy, Graham Poole, Stephen Rogers, Geoff Williams)			
18	Royal Angus	Garry Kilworth	Tony Berry	411
	(Bernie Evans, Rog Peyton, Greg Pickersgill, Linda Pickersgill, Martin Tudor)			
19	The Excelsior	Geoff Ryman	Martin Tudor	426
	(Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Bernie Evans, Nick Mills, Pam Wells)			
20	The Excelsior	Dr Jack Cohen	Bernie Evans	330
	(Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Nick Mills, Richard Standage)			
21	Forte Post House	Colin Greenland	Nick Mills	200
	(David T Cooper, Bernie Evans, Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Chris Murphy)			
22	Royal Angus	Storm Constantine	Helena Bowles	300
	(Bernie Evans, Tony Berry, Carol Morton, Richard Standage, Steve and Jenny Glover)			

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282 Aston SF&F Soc#2
283 Aston SF&F Soc#3
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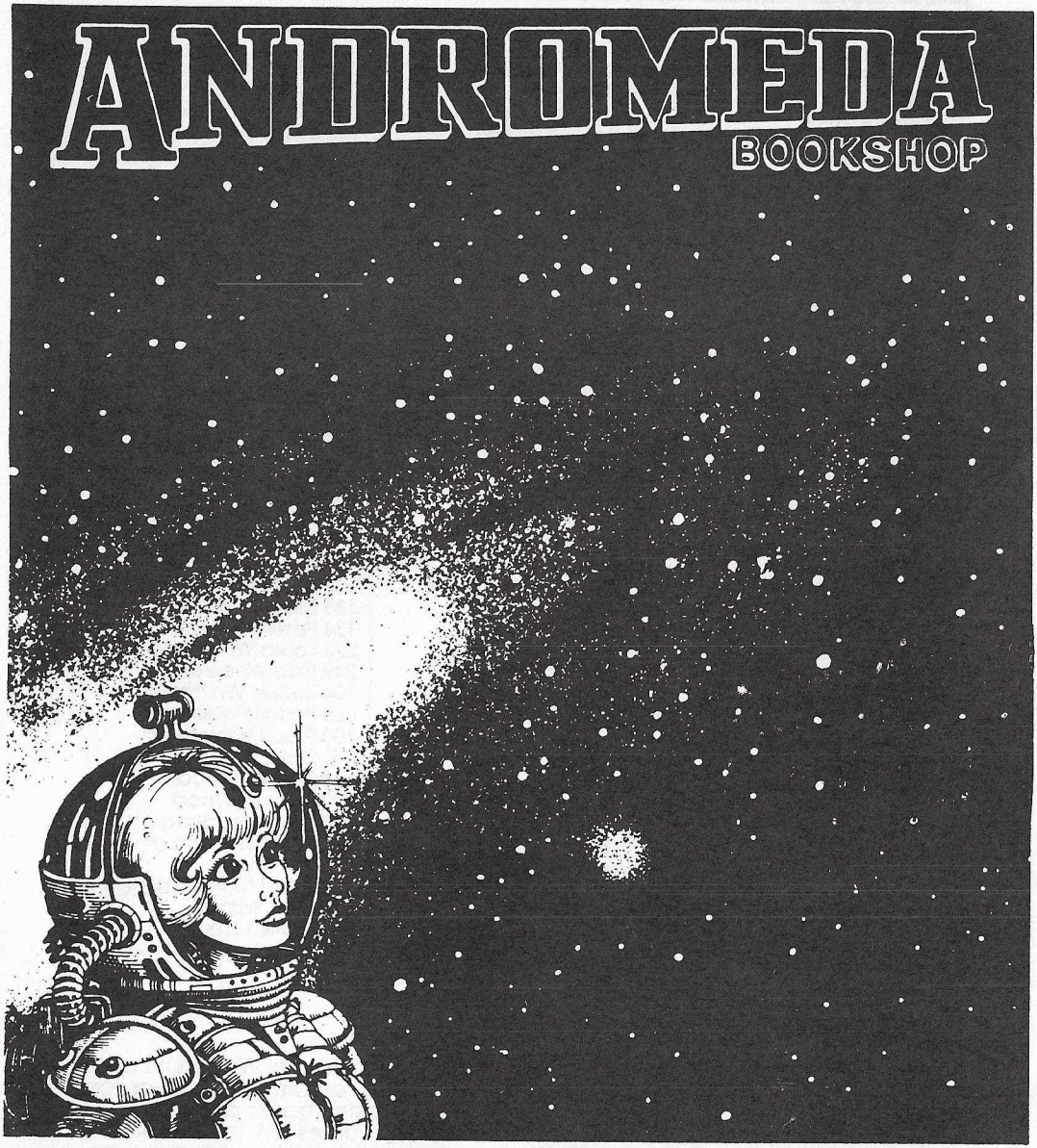

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